"Thillai Govindan's" Miscellany.

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By A. MADHAVIAH, B. A.

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A. MADHĀVIAH, B. A

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THILLAI GOVINDAN'S MISCELLANY.

WOMAN: THE TWO IDEALS.

"Look here, upon this picture, and on this."—*Shakespeare.*

EVERY *he* in the Universe has his own peculiar ideal of "that not impossible *she*," and no two of these countless ideals will be found to agree exactly, the frequent quarrels of two or more he's over one she notwithstanding. But it is easy to classify these ideals, with considerable definiteness so as to secure facility of recognition, according to the nationalities to which the individuals holding them belong, excepting, of course, those far behind or far ahead of the times. Like other human conceptions, these ideals are subject to the law of evolution; but, as they concern directly the most vital interests of man and embody some of his deepest likes and dislikes, they may be described as almost a subtle, unconscious instinct in him, and do not change either violently or frequently. Further, so closely connected are these conceptions with the state of general civilisation in all communities, that some eminent sociologists have regarded them as valuable water-marks by which to judge the level attained by any civilisation.

I propose to contrast here, as far as may be profitable, two* different ideals of womanhood, the English and the Indian, and, I think, that my task will not be quite useless, inasmuch as the

* [All Rights Reserved.] These papers were found in a confused state among the unburnt manuscripts of my late-lamented friend Thillai Govindan and are now published for the first time, in the hope that they may be welcomed by the readers who received his posthumous autobiography so favourably. I had great trouble in arranging them and had even to invent an appropriate title for some of them. I do not expect all readers—especially Indian readers—to accept all the views of my lamented friend, but I have no doubt that those who have made acquaintance with him through his autobiography will be glad to know what opinions he held on various subjects now engaging public attention.—Pamba: Editor of Thillai Govindan's Works.

East and the West have met in this country for good and for evil and will have to rub shoulders with each other for at least a few centuries more. As we Indians and Englishmen belong to the same Aryan stock and once lived together as one community and had the same social institutions and prejudices, a considerable degree of similarity between our ideals of womanhood should not be surprising. The conception of woman's position as primarily inferior and subordinate to man and more or less dependent on him, is, perhaps, the most prominent feature in both the ideals, for it would be erroneous to think that Western civilisation has yet transcended this conception; witness the numerous female franchise institutions and activities of modern times. That there are many essential bodily differences and intellectual disparities between man and woman no one will deny; sex is a most important factor and, as has been well said, "what was decided among the pre-historic protozoa cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament nor can the essential difference between male and female be obliterated with a sweep of the pen by any Senatus Academicus." Whether these differences necessitate the subordination of one to the other as an inevitable result, and whether perfect equality between the sexes in all social, political, and religious concerns is not possible in spite of them, are questions beyond my present purpose. We have simply to take cognizance of the fact that such a subordination does actually exist to the present day and we have to seek for differences between the two ideals within this common limitation.

Both the ideals present three distinct historic phases—the ancient, the mediæval, and the modern, and however fascinating the past history of the ideals may be, I am here concerned mainly with their present stages—after the great scientific and intellectual upheaval of the latter part of the nineteenth century in England and after the dissemination of Western culture in India.

The present-day efforts to emancipate woman and place her on an even pedestal with man politically are but the vibrations of the mighty stir in men's opinions and thoughts which occurred about the middle of the nineteenth century; and that these efforts still remain to be crowned with success is a sufficient indication that the ideal they aim at realising is in advance of the ideal of the majority. It is that ideal which alone I intend to consider

here and contrast with the corresponding Indian picture. It must first be remembered that marriage is not a necessity to either man or woman in England; among us, on the other hand, most men and almost all women marry as a matter of course, or rather, are married by their parents or other relatives, and our marriage is, unlike the English one, practically indissoluble; secondly, female education is well advanced in England, especially among the middle and the higher classes, whereas it is yet in its primitive stage even among the highest classes in India; and lastly, it is not considered *infra dig.* in England for a lady to earn her livelihood or to engage in any charitable concern entailing some sort of physical or mental work.

An English woman does not depend on anybody unless she chooses to do so and there are thousands of women in England leading a perfectly independent life and in no way inferior to men, barring certain political privileges alone. An English wife is her husband's equal, socially and religiously, and is regarded by him as an honourable colleague, and not as a subordinate. Owing, however, to the inevitable division of labour, the spheres of their activities are different and from this circumstance arises a slight disparity in their respective importance wherein we can perceive the remnant of the original conception of woman's subordination to man; but this is always latent and can never be asserted to any material extent without endangering the marriage bond. An English lady is the mistress of her home and within its four walls, her husband bows to her wishes and he always respects her feelings and known prejudices willingly. He wishes her to take an intelligent interest in all that he does and a good husband has very few confidences which his wife does not share. She is to him a true companion in life and she understands him well and participates in all his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows. He freely takes her into society and likes to enjoy a play or an opera in her company; and when he has no leisure for this, he does not grudge her the pleasure and will trust to her good sense and self-respect and let her enjoy herself even without his protecting care. He introduces his friends to her; and if she be a clever or a beautiful woman, he is proud of her success in society and does not suspect her easily or without cause. He likes her to dress well, to take care of her charms that first won his heart, to keep

his home neat and pleasant-looking, and his table wholesome and appetising, to keep the little ones clean and healthy, to sing, play, or read to him, or, perhaps, ride, drive or walk out with him when his day's work is over; in fine, to make his life pleasant unto him and worth living. In return, he will strain every nerve to earn and provide for her and their children and to support her in comfort all her life. He treats her as his equal as far as possible, only, as the bread-winner of the family, he is the right-hand and she the left. He is no Sultan, however, and can derive no real or lasting pleasure from the ministerings of a slave; the seeds of liberty have been sown deep within his being and his natural instinct is against all kinds of tyranny and distinctly on the side of universal equality and freedom. He loves fair-play and has a conscience which will brook no palpable injustice. If their opinions clash on any subject, they agree to differ, the point in dispute permitting; but if it is necessary that only one should prevail, he will rather appeal to her reason, urging his wider experience, knowledge, and responsibility, than claim implicit obedience and subjection as a matter of right. She can possess property independently of him and he does not expect it to be transferred to himself as a mark of conjugal trust and respect. He likes her to be accomplished and encourages her to have intelligent hobbies of her own. He treats her, in short, as an independent personality linked to him for good and for ill, but not inviolably; and though in a relatively dependent position no doubt, not to the extent of having no individuality or rights of her own. She is a separate being with thoughts, feelings, aspirations and rights apart from him and not a minor limb of himself. Like him, she often has avocations, interests and cares peculiarly her own and spends her leisure in such pursuits without any undue interference or supervision. Her marriage was not a surrender of soul, mind and body, but was entered into in the hope of a fuller enjoyment of life and its blessings; and he married not a cook, a steward, a mere bed-mate, a nurse, or even a private secretary, but a friend and companion to cheer and elevate his life and brighten his home with the lamp of love. Such, as I understand it, is the English ideal of womanhood, an ideal which is still slightly imperfect, but which has produced a free and noble race, the foremost people in the world at the present day.

Turn we now to the corresponding Indian picture we are more familiar with. Let but the reader re-call to memory his sensations and feelings when he was within an English church and at the threshold of a Hindu shrine—the high and stately proportions and well-lighted airiness of the one, and the dark and dingy closeness and stifling vapours of the other. Christian and heathen can alike step into the church and admire the noble and magnificent edifice or breathe a humble prayer; but into the Hindu tabernacle, none save the priest can enter, and often doth he sigh within its walls for the wholesome air and bright light of heaven. Much respect is indeed shewn outwardly to the lifeless image, both when it is within its sanctuary, and when it is carried without, but it has no feelings or wishes of its own and is always at the will and pleasure of the priest. As the contrast between the Church and the Temple, so are some of the differences between an English lady and her Indian sister.

Let us, however, look at our own ideal a little more closely: "What is there in the universe nobler than woman," asks a Tamil sage, "if indeed she be endowed with chastity?" and perfect purity in thought, word and deed is the first quality we expect in woman. We give this virtue greater prominence than any other nation in the world and among the laws of modern peoples, our code is unique in imposing a severe penal sentence on any crime against it. We are very jealous and suspicious in temperament and can never forgive wifely infidelity; and nothing will bring out more strikingly and forcibly the brute and the despot within the most polished of us, than such a suspicion. Our women as a class are purer than, perhaps, any other women in the world and we are very proud of it. But we forget that we have attained this high level of purity by keeping the water in a state of stagnation and maintaining the closest watch and ward over the embankments, rigorously shutting out all outside communications and jealously guarding the precious liquid from the touch of even God's light and air, so much so, that, alas! it has become putrid with ignorance and stinking with superstition and is now unfit to be tasted by us and incapable of cooling our mortal thirst. For happier are they now whose springs are not so exclusively guarded and kept covered, but furnish, nevertheless, a pleasant draught as healthy and salutary as refreshing. My Indian readers should not,

however, imagine that Indian women alone are pure. The purity of English women is superior in quality to ours, having stood the test of personal freedom. Our women are "like linnets born within the cage" and know not yet the free and pleasant woods. Look at the following picture drawn by Thackeray and say whether any man can desire a better life-mate: "I think it is no national prejudice which makes me believe that a high-bred English lady is the most complete of all Heaven's subjects in the world. In whom else do you see so much grace, and so much virtue; so much faith, and so much tenderness; with such a perfect refinement and chastity? And by high-bred ladies I don't mean duchesses and countesses. Be they ever so high in station, they can but be ladies, and no more. But almost every man who lives in the world has the happiness, let us hope, of counting a few such persons among his circle of acquaintance—women in whose angelical natures there is something awful, as well as beautiful, to contemplate; at whose feet the wildest and fiercest of us must fall down and humble ourselves, in admiration of that adorable purity which never seems to do or to think wrong." Let me add, that one such beautiful flower of freedom is worth a whole garden of artificial hot-house plants.

Indian husbands do not rightly feel the duty of fidelity to their wives and are often openly and shamelessly unfaithful to them. Purity among males, including the best products of Western culture, is as low as female chastity is high, and, in spite of our *system of infant-marriage*, I am afraid there are but few Arthurs who can honestly face their wives and say, "I was ever virgin save for thee." Those of my English brothers, who in early manhood "sow their wild oats," are, perhaps, no better; but I can confidently assert that English husbands are, as a class, more faithful than their Indian counterparts; and again, they are certainly more consistent in their treatment of their wives; the worst sinner among them will not play the sultan under his wife's very nose and without bestowing a passing thought on her feelings.

The *rationale* of our opinions and conduct in this respect seems to lie in the natural abhorrence and resentment of the master when he sees any marks of independent thought or action in his slave and his earnest solicitude to keep the slave away from all influences likely to disturb that slave's willing servitude; and

this brings us to the next great virtue we desire in our women—obedience. We have been under some sort of despotism or other for several centuries and, therefore, aspire to play the tyrant at home, and women are our born slaves. We can quote chapter and verse to prove that from her cradle to her funeral pyre, a woman can have no independence at any time and must always remain under the control of some male—be it her father, brother, husband, son, or guardian. So often has this been dinned into her ears, and so complete has been her subjection for numerous ages, that she is now a willing slave and never dreams of any independence; and as she inherits no property and cannot work to earn her livelihood, her subjection seems to be secured for ever. When she leaves her parental roof for her husband's, she is thus advised:—

> " * * * Should others share
> Thy husband's love, ne'er yield thyself a prey
> To jealousy; but ever be a friend,
> A loving friend, to those who rival thee
> In his affections. Should thy wedded lord
> Treat thee with harshness, thou must never be
> Harsh in return, but patient and submissive."

Man is to command and woman to obey and there is none so ignorant that he knows not the story of Nalayani or some such prodigy of suffering patience to fling at his wife's head at the least murmur or protest against his callous tyranny. I have read that "if the amount of honour which is shewn by any community to its female members is an indication of the degree of civilisation attained by it, then, the Brahmans are, the most advanced race of men on earth." Even if literally true, this statement does not contradict me, for, the honour shewn is connected with our ideas of the sacredness of female chastity and our anxiety to have it respected by others and it does not in any way affect our national instinct regarding the relative position of the sexes. I am not unaware that many thousands of wives and mothers exercise almost despotic sway over their husbands and sons, but this is solely owing to accidental weaknesses in the character of the male and is not a willing and intelligent admission of the equality or superiority of the female. Why, a male cook getting four or five rupees a

month will not, in theory or practice, acknowledge the superiority of his master's wife and will have a grain of contempt for her as a mere *woman*, in his heart of hearts! Patient and unmurmuring endurance is a virtue which all tyrants naturally desire in their slaves and the great doctrine of self-abnegation is sometimes preached to our women to keep them in subjection. We wish them to lose their beings completely in us, to have no wills or even feelings of their own. A wife, sacrificing her very honour at the bidding of her lord, is held up as a paragon of female excellence and a model for others to imitate. The murmur is rebellion, to protest, a sacrilege. Thus, then, perfect purity at any cost, blind and implicit obedience, and willing self-sacrifice, are the three cardinal virtues we admire in our women and we have secured these qualities in them by a line of action which is as unjust and inhuman as it is pernicious to our well-being as a nation and our happiness in life as individuals. We have converted the best and noblest gift of God to man into a mere tool to gratify our animal appetites. The divine lyre that could discourse the most ravishing and enchanting music and fill our hearts and our homes with perpetual gladness and joy is being used by us as a vulgar foot-stool and we know not the wealth of melody and harmony that sleeps silent within its strings.

I think it needless to describe more minutely the state of our women—it is but too well-known to us and we witness it hourly. But as an instance of the striking contrast of the two ideals, I would only ask my readers to peruse Mill's dedication of his book *On Liberty* or Browning's dedication of his *Men and Women* and then think over the following translation of an Elegy on his wife's death, composed by Thiruvalluvar, the author of the *Kural*, who ranks even higher among the Tamilians than Mill or Browning among Englishmen :—" Sweet cook, loving woman who never disobeyed a single bidding, who shampooed my feet (to make me sleep), slept after me, and got up before me (to attend to my wants early), art thou passing away? How will my eyes sleep at night, (hereafter)?"

A tender and pathetic picture, no doubt, but, how far below the true ideal of womanhood!

We seem to be waking from our long stupor to a sense of our mistake and we are trying to impart education to our women

on Western lines and to endow them with accomplishments, hitherto held vain or immodest. We are not an hour too early, and if we are ambitious of ever attaining political and religious emancipation and freedom, we must first educate and raise our women from the mire of ignorance and superstition in which they are now sunk neck-deep. Freedom is a rich and delicate plant of slow growth and our Indian child-wife is not the soil on which to grow it, nor are ignorance and superstition the manures best suited to its nurture; and the tyrant is often more demoralised and injured than his victim by the exercise of unrestrained power. But, if we would avoid a most painful shock to ourselves and avert a powerful re-action that might arise from it and push our women into even deeper degradation and misery, we should first review our own ideas and deliberately prepare ourselves for the practical results of a liberal female education. Our strength and resources will be doubled, but there will be two heads instead of one and we must renounce absolute monarchy. Are we ready to allow our women separate individualities, feelings and desires, hopes and aspirations, and to root out the seeds of suspicion and jealousy from our hearts? Some of us may deem this a great sacrifice and may, perhaps, feel inclined to pose as martyrs in a noble cause. No; it is our plain duty and, what is more, we will eventually be more happy in every way by the change. May the kind Providence which has wafted the Englishman to our shores to raise us from our long stupor, grant us enough strength of mind and wisdom to emancipate and raise our women and thus help on our national regeneration!

TRUTHFULNESS.

"There is no religion higher than Truth."—*The Mahabharata.*

"WHAT is Truth?" asked Pilate, and the answer, if one was vouchsafed, has not been recorded. All our ideas are relative and our knowledge is as limited as our faculties. Absolute truth is, therefore, inconceivable by man and that is perhaps one of the reasons why Pilate got no answer. Further, pearls are not to be thrown before swine, and Pilate's mental attitude did not merit enlightenment. But it is quite necessary that every human being should have some definite conception of truth, however impossible absolute knowledge of it may be in theory. "Truth is a matter of primary importance to us. It is the very sustenance of the spirit. It is the source and support of rational and moral life. It is to the mind what light is to the eye, what food is to the body. It is the condition of all real progress and prosperity alike for individuals and societies. There is nothing higher or better than truth; nay, there is nothing noble or good except what is true. There is nothing to be preferred to truth; nay, there is nothing which ought not to be sacrificed if found to be contrary to truth......Only where the love of truth is supreme can human character answer to any worthy idea of what it ought to be. If a man love the truth, he will be candid, sincere, impartial, generous, and aspire after purity and perfection; if he be content with falsehood, or any substitute for truth, he condemns himself to meanness and baseness of mind, to unfairness and dishonesty of disposition, to duplicity and deceitfulness of conduct." (Flint's *Agnosticism.*) So writes a Doctor of Divinity in his thoughtful book on Agnosticism. And what does the agnostic himself say? "Truth," writes Huxley, "is better than much profit. I have searched over the grounds of my belief, and if wife and child and name and fame were all to be lost to me one after the other as the penalty, still I will not lie......The longer I live, the more obvious it is to me that the most sacred act of a man's life is to

say and to feel, 'I believe such and such to be true.' All the greatest rewards and all the heaviest penalties of existence cling about that act." There is, therefore, no difference of opinion as to the practical importance of truth to man, widely as men do differ as to what it really is. I do not, however, mean to discuss religion here or speak of the speculative phases of truth which do not directly concern our daily speech and conduct. I speak only of what is usually known as truthfulness, the strict conformity in spirit, of speech and action to the inmost voice of the higher self or conscience, and I shall try to depict what the Indian ideal of truthfulness was and is.

If we observe the lower animals, we easily see that truth is incompatible with fear. When there is no fear, there is no sacrifice of truth; and all untruthful instincts are traceable to an original sense of fear acting on the instinct of self-preservation. Primitive man is akin to the animals from whom he was evolved, and with the dawn of reason, a further element of complication was introduced. The development of reason in man is the history of the world's civilisation, and the conception of truthfulness in speech and conduct prevailing among any community may be taken as a measure of its progress towards the ideal state. It will be wrong to presume that Nature deliberately cares for truth and promotes it. She cares only for the physical safety of the type and natural selection is directly responsible for innumerable cunning artifices, deceptive appearances and false states that we see around us in nature. She does not deliberately choose truth on principle; no more does early man when he is beset by difficulties he cannot comprehend or is unable to surmount; with both, the prime motive is to "get on," as well as possible, and if it be found necessary for the purpose, they do not hesitate to sacrifice truth. But there seems to be a higher spiritual law governing the universe which always tends towards absolute truth and the belief in that law is the basis of all ethics and the fountain-head of the conception of truthfulness, rising higher and higher, with the advancement of civilisation. Instinctive Nature, plant or animal, is as full of truths as of lies and deceptions and it is the privilege of reasoning man deliberately to prefer truth to falsehood, even when it does him immediate injury, nobly believing in the *ultimate* good of such conduct.

From the theory of the origin of falsehood indicated above, it follows that a strong, brave and independent people will be more truthful in act and word than a weak, cowardly and subservient one, and I shall illustrate this from the history of my own community. A very high ideal of truthfulness seems to have been cherished by our ancestors, the early Aryans who overran and settled down in India. The two great national epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, are hinged on a practical illustration of this ideal,—King Dasaratha's, and subsequently his son Rama's, refusal to retract their plighted words, and the proverbially conscientious truthfulness of Prince Yudishtra and the shameless duplicity of Duryodhana. There are numerous other stories in these two epics and elsewhere in the Aryan literature bearing on the same point. When the sage Vasista exhorted Rama to return to Ayodhya, appealing to the obedience due to himself as the family *Guru*, the Prince replied : " Be they mighty sages or one's own preceptors, be they as dear as a mother or one's own sons, O thou learned son of Brahma, can a word, once plighted be retracted ?" The great Emperor Sipi cut and gave away his own flesh to redeem his promise of succour to a persecuted pigeon ; the warrior Karna lost his life refusing to aim an arrow a second time against his promise ; and, rather than retract his word, Yama revealed the secrets of Life and Death to his Brahmin guest and restored to life Savitri's husband. The best story on the subject is of course that of King Harischandra, who when tempted hard to tell a lie, with the penalty of otherwise having to slay with his own hands the wife of his bosom, replied : " I have lost my kingdom ; I have lost my only child ; I have lost all my ancestral wealth and power ; and spiritual salvation is the only hope now remaining for me ; but, even if I have to lose that last hope too, I will not retract my word or utter a falsehood." The story of this King is the Indian counterpart of the great examples of man's temptation—of Adam, of Job and of Faust. And it is noteworthy in this connection that our ancestors attached such supreme importance to truthfulness and based the temptation on that virtue. Their books abound with episodes and anecdotes illustrating their high ideal ; nor are instances wanting in them of the direful effects of a contrary course of conduct, or of even the slightest swerving from the straight path. To take only

one example : The great warrior Drona was invincible with his bow and could not be overcome or killed as long as he wielded that weapon ; and he would not abandon it except in extreme despair, that is, unless his only son Aswasthama died. This son was immortal, but his father had such faith and confidence in the truthfulness of his quondam pupil, though now his enemy, Prince Yudishtra, that he would believe even in his immortal son's death, if only it was vouched for by that Prince. Prince Yudishtra was *morbidly truthful* and had been scrupulously fair in the war, risking not only the success of his side, but even the very lives of his brothers. An elephant in the army named Aswasthama had been killed and by a line of specious reasoning and entreaty, the truthful Prince was persuaded to utter the following reluctant words in Drona's hearing : " Aswasthama killed—the elephant." On hearing the first two words, Drona threw down his bow in despair and grief and was immediately killed by his inveterate and sworn foe, Drupatha. Prince Yudishtra, whose lips no lie had crossed even in fun or frolic, had, after his death, a short experience of hell for this single implied deception, which, after all, was literally true and his chariot-wheels which had never before touched the earth, sank into the ground as he uttered the prevarication ! This narrative illustrates forcibly and clearly the high ideal of truthfulness held by our forefathers and I must not fail to point out that one's words and acts, and even silences, are judged not literally or even by the effects, but strictly by the spirit and the real inner motive. The war he was waging and the killing of his enemies—including Drona—in battle, were no doubt legitimate and just in Yudishtra's eyes, and the words he uttered were also literally true ; but the end cannot justify the means and his inner conscience blamed him and he had to pay the penalty. Truth is an end and a test in itself and no amount of resultant good can justify anything in the least untrue, as judged by the inner motive. The early Aryans were a strong and sturdy race of conquerors in this country and when they wrote the books I have referred to, they had neither been enervated and demoralised by a tropical climate and pernicious social customs nor subjugated in their turn by a fresher and sturdier race of people. No wonder then that the ideal of truthfulness among such a brave and independent community was so high and

uncompromising and that they regarded truth as the highest religion and conceived of God as the Absolute Truth.

This pre-historic ideal appears to have been cherished and followed in later and historic times as well. The Hindu kings who claimed their descent from the solar and the lunar dynasties emulated the high and noble examples of the earlier heroes of those dynasties portrayed in the national Epics and the Puranas, and made it a point of honour to preserve unsullied the great traditions and ideals, and vied with each other for the reputation of a valour that disdained to steal a victory and a truthfulness dearer than one's own life itself. As is the monarch so will the subjects be, says a Sanskrit saying; and, three centuries before Christ, the Greek ambassador Megasthenes visited India and found that, "above all, no Indian was ever known to tell a lie." There was no deterioration even in mediæval times. "The eulogy," says Col. Yule, commenting on *Marco Polo's Travels*, "is so constant among mediæval travellers that it must have had a solid foundation. In fact, it would not be difficult to trace a chain of similar testimony from ancient times down to our own. Arrian says no Indian was ever accused of falsehood. Hiuen Tsang ascribes to the people of India eminent uprightness, honesty and disinterestedness. Friar Jordanus (*circa* 1330) says the people of Lesser India (Sind and Western India) were true in speech and eminent in justice; and we may also refer to the high character given to the Hindus by Abul Fazl." According to my diagnosis of the origin of falsehood, this state of affairs was sure to be changed under the influence of fear acting on the instinct of self-preservation, with the subjugation of India by the Mussulmans; but even long after this and down to the advent of the Portuguese, this high ideal of truthfulness appears to have been preserved in isolated and independent Hindu kingdoms such as Vijayanagar, as is evidenced by the sympathetic historian of that "forgotten empire."

But the subjugation of the country and the people by a foreign conqueror, who, brave and truthful himself, was yet swayed by the fanatical fury of a young and living religion and showed no regard or toleration for the sentiments and beliefs of those he conquered, was a certain death-blow to the ancient ideal of truthfulness. There was already corruption at the core of their

religion, and a long and peaceful residence in a rich, tropical climate had sapped the vigour of the Aryans and made them effete and unmartial. Had the foreigner come a thousand years before, they would either have driven him back to his wilds or been killed to a man in defence of their homes and gods; but now, they were too physically weak to meet and overcome him and that very weakness made it impossible for them mentally and morally also to become heroes and martyrs. They bent their heads to the inevitable, and covering themselves with lies and hypocrisies let the tempest pass over them, choosing *to be* at any cost rather than be destroyed and not be at all. As, in religion, they had set up a stone or a wooden image inside their temples to represent their original conception of the great Omnipresent, the One without a Second, so in their minds they set up a lower ideal of truthfulness in the place of the ancient one which they were no longer able to follow. Necessity knows no law, and they adjusted themselves to suit the altered times and valued truth not for itself, but by the profit it brought them. "Falsehood was regarded as an exercise of the intellect like any other, to be judged of by its object and its success." Truthfulness ceased to be a duty in itself and duplicity and untruthfulness were justified by the "good" they resulted in. O! what a fall was there, and who will not weep tears of blood at such a debasement! My revered forefathers! I will not judge you harshly or foolishly. Am I not what I am now, a much deteriorated, but yet "the highest type of Indian mankind"; the heir to the noble "results of nearly three thousand years of hereditary education and self-restraint," the member of "a class becoming the ruling power in a country, not by force of arms, but by the vigour of hereditary culture and temperance," with the blood of the Vedic sages running more or less purely within my veins,—am I not what I am solely on account of your duplicity and hypocrisy? "Whatever the duty of turning the second cheek," says the eminently sane author of *Social Rights and Duties*, "it is clearly not a national duty." And who can say that you should have become martyrs to truth and died out as a race from the face of the earth?

The down-hill course is not merely easy and pleasant, but also very rapid, and a few centuries of enforced hypocrisy and pretension have demoralised us to an appalling extent, and the

shades of our truthful forefathers can scarcely recognise their degenerate progeny. It is a foul and disgraceful picture and my heart bleeds to look on it ; but I am sure that under altered conditions and with strenuous exertion, we shall yet forget the intermediate past, shake off its baneful effects, and once more enthrone in our hearts the ancient ideal of truthfulness which we have lost and forgotten ; and it is this hope which gives me courage to write about it.

I sometimes dream how different our fate might have been if the Europeans, and a purer and sturdier race of them than the Portuguese, nay, these very Britons themselves, had conquered us and taken us in hand before the Mussulmans ever came to India. For it is certain that our training under the Mussulmans was no advantage to us with the Englishman. We had lost our high ideal and our only aim was to please our master, whoever he was, and to exist. In such a state we were handed over in most places to the British successors of the great Moghul, more like chattels than otherwise, and our ready duplicity and unscrupulous hypocrisy lowered us even more in the Englishman's estimation. The Englishman's faith in himself and the infallibility of his opinions is even stronger than his faith in God and His Gospel, and in addition to this, he is a very impatient person. Such a man would but rarely meet with truth at our hands, and the opinion he formed of us was therefore a most unfortunate one, though not quite undeserved by our behaviour towards him.

But are all Englishmen so many Harischandras and do not we see them telling lies and playing the hypocrite? asks my friend Pamba. O, no! my friend, we have no society of saints and martyrs in the world, and the most advanced peoples are not yet within miles of the golden age. But that need not prevent us from speaking the bare truth for once and honestly admitting that the Englishmen are, as a class, far more truthful than we are at present, and for very good reasons as I have tried to show above. This frank admission will, by itself, do us a world of good, for, as has been truly remarked, there are great hopes of any one honestly dissatisfied with himself; and a knowledge of one's own defects is the first step to improvement. I simply appeal direct to every Hindu heart to bear out the truth of my above statements which may, by some, be wrongly deemed unpatriotic.

Let me now briefly indicate a few ways in which every one of us may better his own character and thus help on the recovery of the golden ideal of our forefathers, the precious heirloom we have lost by circumstances almost beyond our control. Though fear is the primeval progenitor of all untruths, the patriarch of the brood of lies, yet are many falsehoods born of motives and causes but remotely or not at all allied to fear. Self-interest in a thousand and one protean forms, avarice and lustfulness, the desire for admiration and applause, the magic fascination for the marvellous and the mysterious, envy and love of scandal, vanity and self-deception, social etiquette and the pleasure of flattering and pleasing others, love of fun and frolic, and the very sense of humour—rare as it is as common sense, —mere habit, indifference and carelessness, arrogance and anger, all these land us in the quagmire of duplicity and falsehood, so much so, that, lying, like fever, may be regarded not merely as a disease in itself, but also as a symptom of most other moral and mental diseases. And do not many virtues too land us in the same bog of lies? I have heard it stated that so many lies are permitted to save a man's life, so many more if he were a Brahman, so many to bring about the marriage of a virgin maid, and so on. In fact, the common opinion, now at any rate, seems to be that a lie is justified by its end and is venial if that be good, especially if it be the good of others. The advocates of this view argue that in this world of relative knowledge and relative truths, a lie does not count for much if it results in some benefit. The great Tamil sage Thiruvalluvar, who has placed conscience on a very high pedestal and extolled truthfulness in no equivocal terms, appears to have countenanced this view in the two couplets defining what is true and what is false. Says he :—

"வாய்மை எனப்படுவ தியாதெனின் யாதொன்றும்
தீமை யிலாத சொலல்."
"பொய்மையும் வாய்மை யிடத்த புரைதீர்ந்த
நன்மை பயக்கு மெனின்."

I shall simply translate the accepted commentary on these two stanzas. "'If it be asked what is specially distinguished as truth, it is this; uttering words which cause not the least evil

to any other living being.' Stating what actually happened is hereby prohibited ; the meaning is, that, if it be not evil it will be truth, but if causing evil, falsehood...... 'If they result in good, without causing any injury to others, even false words are of the nature of true words.' Good that causes no injury to others is charity; and we do charity when, by false words, we avert evil or death from a living being that was about to incur it and make him glad thereby. The meaning is, that saying what did not occur will be false if it results not in good, but true if good is caused thereby. By these two stanzas, truth is defined as a statement of facts when it causes no evil, and of what did not really happen when it results in good, and falsehood is defined as a statement of what did not happen when it results in no good and of facts when it causes evil." I am not unaware that this preference of goodness to truth is regarded as a higher and a nobler view of life than the strict adhesion to truth to the best of one's lights and inner conscience. The latter is considered as *rajasic* and the former *satvic*; it is something like divine mercy transcending strict justice. I have no quarrel with those honest souls who, sure of their moorings and sincere in their disinterestedness, deliberately put out their lights on a pathless deep and give themselves cable to this dangerous extent. But, such saints are yet too few in the world, and the vast multitude, tossed about on life's perplexing waves, cannot tend and foster too carefully the faintly glimmering light within themselves lest their frail barks be shattered and wrecked on the rocks of selfishness and sin. If the Devil can be believed in, and he seems to speak the truth here, the best of us are spreading lies broadcast in the world, daily and hourly, though, perhaps, somewhat unconsciously. When Faust refuses to swear, without previously ascertaining the fact, that Martha's husband was dead, he is mocked in these words:—

"Oh, holy man! methinks I have you there!
In all your life say, have you ne'er
False witness borne, until this hour?
Have you of God, the world, and all it doth contain,
Of man, and that which worketh in the heart and brain,
Not definitions given, in words of weight and power,
With front unblushing, and a dauntless breast?
Yet, if into the depth of things you go,
Touching these matters, it must be confess'd,
As much as of Herr Schwerdtlein's death you know."

Faust's reply is not satisfactory, and the same argument is elaborated by Balfour in his *Foundations of Belief*, while exposing the scientific criticism of theological premises. But the fact that we often lie unconsciously and without meaning it, should induce us to guard against such involuntary remissness and not from an excuse for deliberate and wilful falsehood. My child asked me one day whether all novelists were not liars, inasmuch as they narrated things which never did really happen. I should prefer that attitude of mind to the dangerous prerogative of constantly sitting in judgment over falsehoods and sifting those that end in good from those that do not.

Speaking the truth, fearless and unmindful of consequences, is the height of valour, for, in doing so, we overcome and put to shame no less a person than the Devil. Further, there is this incalculable benefit: when a man makes up his mind deliberately never to allow a lie to cross his lips knowingly, he at once gets rid of most of the sins and vices that mortal flesh is heir to; for, human laws and public opinion make it impossible for any one to practise any vice without the armour of falsehood, and, as has been truly remarked, "Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits them all." Thus is human character purified of all dross and alloy by one powerful effort and shines for ever after as sterling gold.

The British supremacy in India is, I sincerely believe, for our special good, and it will, and ought to, continue for a considerable time more. The esteem and regard of our rulers is, therefore, of supreme importance to us, and while courage may command admiration or fear, and cowardice meet with pity or contempt, it is high character alone that can win the respect and sympathy of a free and brave people. It is, therefore, the first duty of every Indian patriot to impress himself on the minds of his English superiors and friends by means of his truthfulness and moral courage; and though our past conduct and the unfortunate opinion therefrom formed of us as a class by our rulers, makes them sometimes stare in amazement or even regard it as impertinence or revolt when we boldly speak out unpalatable truths, I have not the least doubt that such conduct will eventually meet with their appreciation, and they will come to look upon us as brethren not unworthy of the Aryan name. The hue and cry that was raised throughout the land when the Viceroy spake out a home-truth to

us the other day,* is a clear proof that we have not quite forgotten the ancient ideal. Let us then make haste to belie the accusation, by more truthful speech and conduct. Even granting that we are truth-loving and honest, the charge should be a warning to us that we do not come up to the English ideal, for, right or wrong, the complaint was sincere and honest. It does not profit us much to hunt up old books and point out that the accuser told a fib or two to a Korean courtier years ago, ignoring the spirit of his utterance and forgetting the humour of the situation. I should, therefore, like that every one of us, great and small, whether in the service of Government or not, should speak out our opinions boldly and honestly, and not merely bow with a "Yes, your Honour," to whatever a European says to us; and also, not let any false opinion or statement pass unchallenged, by a "discreet," but really cowardly silence that is often mistaken for an acquiescence. Our actions must correspond to our convictions and utterance, and then, indeed, we shall appear in quite a different light to our rulers. Our national retina has not been benumbed to the extent of being insensible to truth, nor has our intelligence become too feeble to sift and comprehend it. Our moral courage to express it in words and deeds has alone been sapped to a deplorable extent, but courage is contagious, and the example of a brave, free, and tolerant people, and our daily contact with them are already bearing fruit to good purpose. Lying, exaggeration, prevarication, flattery, and unscrupulous obsequiousness become, after some time, crystallized, as it were, into involuntary tricks of thought and speech, by mere force of habit; and while, therefore, long and strenuous conscious effort is required to cure a cofirmed "man of the world," it is easy to train a child or a youth in a contrary fashion. It, therefore, behoves every father of us to instil ideas of truthfulness into the minds of his children, even at the risk of marring some innocent pleasures, and always to encourage them to speak the truth. Brought up from childhood in such a manner and with such an ideal before them, I am sure that the next generation will be infinitely better and happier than ourselves, and that is "a consummation devoutly to be wished."

* Lord Curzon's speech at the Convocation of the Calcutta University—PAMBA.

CASTE.

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."—*Shakespeare.*

The native of a busy, modern town, one who was born and who lives, moves, and has his being in it, does not think often or much of its smoky chimneys and offensive drains, its rattling vehicles and dusty streets, its endemic maladies and ubiquitous mosquitoes, and the score of other unavoidable discomforts which have become part and parcel of his daily life. A visitor from the country-side, on the other hand, cannot think of anything but these, and feels stupefied and amazed at his urban brother who can support and even enjoy his existence under such conditions, and in such an atmosphere. Not that he is quite new to smoke, or dust, or drains, or vehicles, or disease-germs, or even his old friend the mosquito, but that he never imagined that all of them, and each in its worst form, could be so concentrated into one unhappy spot, and his flesh and blood cannot stand it. Such are the different mental attitudes of a Hindu, and of an Englishman newly arriving in India, towards the system of caste prevalent in this country. The Hindu goes through it all, and with instinctive ease, every day of his life, conforming in one particular, evading another, justifying this, criticising that, oppressing, or oppressed, or both, and, on the whole, galled as little as may be by the ancient fetters; the Englishman, on the other hand, who understands well the social distinctions and restrictions in his own country, who has travelled much and observed caste in some form or other in all the countries he has been in, and who has also read of the systems that prevailed among the ancient peoples of Greece and Rome, is simply stunned by the spectacle presented to him, can scarcely believe his eyes, and wonders how any intelligent human being, laying no small claim to civilisation, and really possessed of much culture and learning, can lead even one hour of such an existence. If he be a shrewd man, he soon ceases to wonder how a mere handful of his countrymen, a

superior race, no doubt, but a mere drop in the ocean, holds in subjection and rules with ease the countless millions of this vast continent. But speedily the spell is broken and he is drawn into the mighty current and begins to take sides, liking or disliking the Brahman or the Sudra almost unconsciously, curbing his righteous indignation, and abandoning the task of cleansing such an Augean stable as one too vast for his strength and of but doubtful advisability. "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world," and thus his moral conscience is appeased.

Historians are fairly well agreed as to how caste originated in India. When the Aryans first entered this country and overran the Punjab, they recognised no castes. They were nomadic in their habits and patriarchal in polity. They were, however, resisted at every step by the sons of the soil, a darker race than themselves, whom they called *Dasyus*. These were conquered and made *dasas* or serfs, the *Sudras* of the four later castes. When the Aryans gradually abandoned their nomadic life and settled down in the country, three social grades came to be recognised among them, the *Brahmans* or priests, the *Rajans* or fighters, and the *Visas* or common people. Occupations have a natural tendency to become hereditary in all societies, and these three grades acquired definiteness and distinction in course of time. But for a long while and to a comparatively recent period, they freely inter-dined and inter-married, only, as a rule, the *Brahmans* took care of the soul of the nation, the *Kshattriyas* of the property, and the *Vaisyas* of the stomach and animal wants, but even this rule was not strictly followed, for there were many priestly kings and royal sages.

These four primal divisions, three social and the fourth racial in origin, have, according to Bhandarkar, multiplied into more than three thousand castes in the course of over two thousand years, owing to the influence of five causes,—race, locality, excommunication for breach of caste-regulations, formation of trade-guilds, and religion. The learned patriot attributes this "to the entire absence of 'political and national feelings'" and remarks that "Pride and other feelings that divide man from man have had full swing in the history of India and sympathy or fellow-feeling has been confined to the narrowest possible sphere." The vastness of the country and the difficulties of inter-

communication, the mixture of the conquering and the conquered races and the difference in the dialects spoken, must have also contributed powerfully to this rapid differentiation.

No great social institution is suddenly brought into existence by Act of Parliament or by the fiat of any learned academy and I have shown that caste is no exception to the rule. It came into being naturally where there was a need for it and gradually developed and evolved in the course of numerous generations. But in those days it was a living and growing institution and so was pliant and elastic and hurt not the limbs it sought to guide and train. There is abundant evidence for this in our *Puranas* and epics, our *Smrities* and *Shastras.* But gradually, corruption set in at the core, and the ambition of certain classes speedily brought about the cessation of life and a state of *rigor mortis.* The following extracts from Manu and Parasara, expounding the law between man and man, need no comment from me :—

"Chandalas and Svapachas shall live outside the village; they shall have no utensils for their use; their property shall consist in dogs and asses . . . They shall put on clothing taken off dead bodies and eat their food in broken pots. Their ornaments shall be made of iron and they shall always wander about." (*Manu Smriti.*") If a Brahman happens to talk to a Chandala, he shall (in order to be purified from the pollution arising therefrom) talk to other Brahmans and repeat Savitri. A Brahman who has slept with a Chandala shall fast for three days. A Brahman who has walked on a road with a Chandala is purified by the repetition of Gayatri. A Brahman touching a Chandala shall forthwith look at the sun and also perform his ablutions with his clothing on. If a Brahman drinks water from a well touched by the pot of a Chandala, he is purified after eating barley cooked in cow's urine, for three days . . . If a Brahman allows a Chandala to live in his house, without knowing that he is such, he is purified if he performs a number of expiatory ceremonies, besides setting fire to his house." (*Parasara Smriti*). The position and treatment of these unfortunate out-castes do not appear to have improved even under the Muhammadan rule, though Islam recognises no caste distinctions between man and man. Their condition at the close of the eighteenth century is thus described by the Abbé Dubois:

4

"The contempt and aversion with which the other caste and particularly the Brahmans regard these unfortunate people are carried to such an excess that, in many places, their presence or even their foot-prints are considered sufficient to defile the whole neighbourhood. They are forbidden to cross a street in which Brahmans are living. Should they be so ill-advised as to do so, the latter would have the right, not to strike them themselves because they could not do so without defilement or even touch them with the end of a long stick, but to order them to be severely beaten by other people. . . . . . Throughout the whole of India, the Pariahs are looked upon as slaves by other castes and are treated with great harshness. Hardly anywhere are they allowed to cultivate for their own benefit, but are obliged to hire themselves out to the other castes who in return for a minimum wage exact the hardest tasks from them. . . . . They live in hopeless poverty and the greater number lack sufficient means to procure even the coarsest clothing. They go about almost naked or at best clothed about in the most hideous rags. . . . . Among the forests on the Malabar Coast there lives a tribe which, incredible as it may seem, surpasses the two (Pariahs and Pullars) of which I have just spoken, in degradation and squalid misery. They are called Pulayas and are looked upon as below the level of beasts which share this wild country with them. They are not even allowed to build themselves huts, to protect themselves from the inclemencies of the weather. A sort of lean-to supported by four bamboo-poles and open at the sides serves as a shelter for some of them and keeps off the rain, though it does not screen them from the wind. Most of them however make for themselves what may be called nests in the branches of the thickest-foliaged trees where they perch like birds of prey for the greater part of the twenty-four hours. They are not even allowed to walk peaceably along the high road. If they see any one coming towards them, they are bound to utter a certain cry and to go a long way round to avoid passing him. A hundred paces is the very nearest they may approach any one of a different caste. . . . The Pulayas live an absolute savage life and have no communication whatever with the rest of the world."

And what is the condition of these low-castes to-day, these real sons of the soil who owned the country before the Aryans

and the Dravidians wrested it from them and extirpated them or drove them into the mountains and woods, these *Indians* to whom *India* should belong if there were poetical justice in the world,—what is their condition after more than a century of Western culture and civilisation? The government has abolished slavery and so we dare not sell them or kill them now; the Christian missionary has baptised some of them and so we freely stretch out our hands and even open our doors to the metamorphosed, partly in fear of and partly to please the upholders of *Pax Britannica.* But what have my educated and enlightened countrymen, the redoubted patriots who demand equal privileges with the Englishman, done for themselves? Go into any South-Indian village, or better into that picturesque coast of pepper and palms, that land of plenty without luxury, learning without refinement, beauty without morals, charity without discrimination, and superstition without stint, go into Malabar and see for yourselves how these poor wretches are treated by their fellowmen, if indeed your brimming tears and the rules that keep them far away from all civilisation will let you see them. Truly has the poet said that "man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." And how dare we shamelessly face our rulers and ask them for equal privileges and kinder treatment? Do we do unto these unfortunates as we would be done by? Are we at least prudent in our selfishness and do we not, in our purblind pride, forget that what the Christian missionary gains is a clear loss to us in more ways than one?

If such is still the condition of the oppressed classes, the privileged oppressors are certainly in no enviable position at present. There is a shrewd proverb which prays God to help the rich, for the poor can beg. An inexorable Nemesis has at last overtaken my brethren, high-caste blue-bloods of the land, and they are cordially hated by the other castes and have become the pet aversion of a good many of our rulers whose sympathies, as a free and generous people, are naturally with the weak and the oppressed. "Wanted a manager; non-Brahman preferred": "Wanted a clerk; no Brahman need apply": "Wanted an overseer; a Christian or a Muhammadan": and similar advertisements are often seen in the newspapers of the day and are sometimes found even above the signatures of the superior officers of a government which professes

to recognise no caste, creed, or colour in such matters. According to a story in the *Talmud*, Alexander knocked at the gates of Paradise for entrance, announcing himself in reply to the guardian angel, as "Alexander—*the* Alexander—Alexander the Great—the Conqueror of the World"; but the angel curtly replied, "We know him not; this is the Lord's gate; only the righteous enter here." Somewhat similar is the experience of my brethren now.

It were but a small disadvantage and perhaps even a blessing in disguise if the denial of the official loaves and fishes were the only result of the present reaction against the "lords of the earth." But, no; the old order hath changed in every way, and the new hath taken its place, and though we have not been slow to avail ourselves of the advantages of the new order of things in some matters, we are not ready for it in all respects and our position is therefore extremely awkward and ridiculous. We have not yet honestly and stalwartly faced the new order of things, realised fully all that it means and its ultimate aims, and deliberately adapted ourselves to suit its conditions. What changes have taken place in our society and in our habits have been unconsciously brought about by the mere force of circumstances and do not therefore show any signs of intelligent guidance or choice and we are naturally the worse off for such accidental drifting. Not one of us leads an honest and consistent life. Almost literally at every step of our daily course we break through some olden rule or restriction which we have not openly disavowed and which we would rather like that others should believe we are conforming to. And not only do we attempt to impose on others and delude one another in this manner, but we also cheat ourselves successfully to a considerable extent and we rarely try to formulate to ourselves our own inmost convictions or to reconcile our daily actions with them. There is a professor, a deep student of history and sociology, who holds intelligent audiences spell-bound for hours at a time expounding the principles of the conduct of life to them, and who is convinced of the many evils of early marriage and its contributions to the present deplorable state of our society, and yet he does not scruple to give his daughter, a mere child, in marriage, and he does not lose a whit of our respect and admiration for him by such an act. There is a double-winged graduate of our University who does not like to forego the regard of his orthodox Brahmin relatives and

friends on the one hand, or the conveniences and advantages of the refreshment rooms on the railway lines and the hospitality of his European friends on the other, who smears himself with holy ashes and appears in Vedic simplicity among the former and wins their applause and blessings in the morning, yet travels in European costume and fashion, or spends his time with his European friends in the evening, and we have nothing but admiration for the elasticity of his conscience. There is a keen and uncompromising satirist who is never tired of exposing and ridiculing the rottenness of our social practices and the principles of slavery that govern and regulate our marriage customs, and yet with cool shamelessness he purchases husbands for his own infant daughters, and sells his educated sons, and we see nothing out of the way in his conduct. And once more, *there is the manager of a girls'* school who does not send his own daughters to the school, the rich advocate of sea-voyages who does not send his own son abroad, the pathetic pleader of the widows' cause whose widowed sisters and daughters are pining away in despair within his house, the anti-nautch purist who is a secret wanderer by nights, and the eloquent preacher of universal brotherhood whose "low-caste" tenants are no better off than the rest and who resents the least "presumption" of his Sudra clerk with the utmost acrimony. And if there is one such, there are a hundred, nay, more, every one of us presents in himself one or more of the traits above depicted and is a pitiable picture of shameless inconsistencies. We are not savages living solely by instincts and impulses, and how long can we with impunity set at nought the eternal moral laws of human civilisation? And as long as our social customs and laws are not revised and modified to suit these later times and altered circumstances, hypocrisy will be an indispensable condition of success and all swimming against the current will prove futile.

A shrewd and observant member of the Indian Civil Service, who had spent nearly thirty years in this country and had mingled more or less freely with all sorts and conditions of its inhabitants, recently defined Hinduism as *Caste* and I am not certain that he was far from the truth. The formidable and complex nature of the question at issue can, therefore, be easily imagined and the difficulty of the problem is increased a hundred-fold by the fact that the system of caste, as at present prevalent, has more unwritten

than written laws, and the former command more allegiance than the latter and are practically held to be more inviolable. I have already recapitulated the origin of caste in India and no one will deny that it once played a very important and necessary role in the progress of the Indians. A French writer of eminence has stated that it was caste that enabled the Indians to withstand Islam so successfully; and though I am not sure whether a refined form of casteless, monotheistic Islam, imbued with the higher doctrines of Hinduism, would not have been better for us as a nation, I am not inclined to murmur at the wise dispensation of Providence or to regret the preservation of their nationality by the Hindus, even at such a terrible cost. This one feat is, by itself, of sufficient magnitude and importance to endow the system of caste with lasting fame and to hand down to posterity the wisdom and foresight of our great forefathers who evolved it. Another thinker has attributed to caste all that is great, noble and lasting in the Indian civilisation. According to the laws of biology, homogeneity of structure means a primitive state of existence, and progress is not possible without high and complex differentiation. The system of caste was adopted in India to develop and evolve various progressive ideals of life and as long as there is a law of heredity with far-reaching results, isolation and exclusiveness are indispensable to progress. It is only natural that a community or sect which has, by long generations of self-culture and control, developed to a high extent some physical, mental or moral attributes and faculties, should be unwilling to dissipate and destroy them by promiscuous inter-mingling with a community which is inferior or at least does not possess those excellences. Such self-protective regulations are to be found among all the civilised peoples of ancient and modern times, and caste is only the Indian edition of the Code. I will not deny the truth of these statements or attempt to minimise the value of the great scientific principles underlying the origin of the system of caste and its evolution. I only wish to remind my countrymen that what is good at one time need not necessarily be good for ever and that even good customs often corrupt the world if blindly followed in a cast-iron groove. I know that there is no community which does not observe caste in some form or other; in fact, social evolution would be meaningless and impossible without some such distinc-

tions. But the very admission that caste is the *Indian* edition of the Social Tariff Code, implies that other and different versions are possible and are really extant. If caste did us a lot of good in the past and helped us to withstand Islam and to evolve a graded scale of the ideals of life, it did not achieve all this in the form in which it now rules us, but in a far more reasonable and pliant form, as is evidenced by our own annals, religious and secular. Further, the times we live in are, in numerous and very important respects, different from the ages when caste wrought us so much good and preserved us as a nation; and it should not be forgotten that the dry and broken shell out of which the bird has emerged will only hinder its flight if tied round its neck once it has served its purpose. I do not propose to throw all caste overboard. I do not know whether all men will be absolutely equal in every respect even during the millennium and until such a dull and uninteresting state is attained, there will be distinctions between man and man and it would be futile and foolish to rail against them. But this fact confers no rights of tyranny on any human being, nor does it require us to erect a fence round ourselves so closely as to cut off all inter-communication with our fellow-beings and restrict our bounds of growth by a cramping and suicidal narrowness.

The Devil will sometimes quote Scripture for his own purposes and it is a well-known fact that a wise book is often abused by unscrupulous or ignorant persons. I have often thought that the *Bhagavad Gita*, than which, perhaps, no book crystallises more succinctly the higher principles of Hinduism or, next to the little-known *Vedas*, commands more respect, has been thus abused by my brethren to their own advantage. It professes to be a discourse between two Kshattriyas reported by a Brahman and even if this were not true, the author of the epic in which it occurs as an episode, was a Brahman. An aristocratic spirit may therefere be expected in it; and though, as a whole, the book is an out-and-out leveller of humanity, and owes its supreme merit to that fact, we are not disappointed in our expectation, and the ambitions and aspirations of the "lower-castes" are crushed with a Machiavellian artfulness and subtlety. Says the *Gita* (XVIII. 41 to 47) :—

"O Brahmans, Kshattriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, O Parantapa, the Karmas (duties; action arising from the nature fashioned

by past thoughts and desires) have been distributed, according to the qualities born of their own natures.

Severity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, and also uprightness, knowledge, experience, piety, are the Brahman-Karma, born of his own nature.

" Prowess, boldness, firmness, dexterity, and also not flying from battle, generosity, the nature of a ruler, are the Kshattriya-Karma, born of his own nature.

" Ploughing, protection of cattle, and trade, are the Vaishya-Karma, born of his own nature. Action of the nature of service is the Shudra-Karma, born of his own nature.

" The man reacheth perfection who is content in his own Karma. Listen thou how perfection is won by him who is content in his own Karma.

" THAT, the forth-giver of beings, by whom all this is spread out, by worshipping Him in his own Karma, a man winneth perfection.

"Better is one's own Dharma, though destitute of merits, than the well-executed Dharma of another. He who doeth the Karma laid down by his own nature incurreth not sin."

" Better one's own Dharma, though destitute of merit, than the dharma of another, well-discharged. Better death in the discharge of one's own Dharma; the Dharma of another is full of danger." (*Ibid.* III. 35).

It is true that the highest and the rarest virtues are expected in the "higher castes" and that lower natures will rise morally by severing them and thus coming in contact with them. It is likewise true that real merit and not mere birth is taken into account in ranking a man as of any caste. But when caste became a birth-right, as it was sure to become in course of time, the injunction to stick at all costs to the prescribed duties of the caste into which one is born no doubt as the result of past Karmas, became a powerful weapon in the hands of the favoured ones to keep down their unfortunate fellow-beings and stifle their aspirations and ambitions. Even without any special instruction, the lower classes would naturally think that it was no concern of theirs if the high-caste men failed to act up to the prescribed duties and cherish and practise the virtues peculiar to them, and would content themselves with fulfilling their own

destiny of subordination and service. To my mind, this seems to account for the ease with which the Brahmans tyrannised over the lower classes and held them under subjection, even long after they themselves had ceased to be *sattvic*. It accounts too for the instinctive veneration with which they are treated by the lower classes to this day and for the respect and awe which a member of the lower classes feels almost unconsciously towards a Brahman, though dressed not in Vedic garments, but in English tweeds and patent leather. It is not surprising, therefore, that after such an authoritative justification and sanction and with such careful provisions, the system of caste has managed to survive all the national calamities and mishaps, and now exercises an iron sway over the minds not merely of the masses, but even of the cultured and enlightened part of my countrymen. I shall now proceed to examine how it affects us as a nation and whether it may be modified to suit these altered times.

The craving for the unknown and perhaps, the unknowable is said to be a common malady and I have been often subject to it. I have sometimes felt that I would gladly give up a few or even as many as ten years of my short span of life to know what the state of India will be, say, a couple of centuries hence. In such musings I have frequently noted and deplored the absence among us of almost all the elements which can bind and solder together a vast number of human beings into one people and inspire them with the feeling of a common nationality. I have observed in the first place how India is a great continent with strikingly varying differences of climate and physical features, and is not one compact country with sufficient uniformity to rear up a great people. Then there are differences in language which made one Indian unintelligible to another, and differences in religion which prevent sympathy and mutual help; and lastly, I have noted that there is caste which makes all social intercourse and union practically impossible, even among persons living together in the same district, speaking the same language and worshipping the same gods. Many of my readers, more familiar with English than with Indian history, will easily recollect how, within a very small compass, as compared with India, intervening seas and hills and differences in language, religion, and customs kept apart man

from man in the British Isles and how, even to-day, an Englishman, an Irishman, a Welshman and a Scot do not quite feel and behave towards each other as they readily grant they ought to on principle as common members of the British nation, and how they often betray curious signs of provincial patriotism and pride. No wonder, then, that in India, where these disintegrating influences are a thousand-fold accentuated, a united Indian nation appears to be as imaginary as the proverbial man in the moon. But hope reigns eternal in the human breast, and my own breast, at least, as far as my country is concerned, is not less human than any other. In the railway lines and telegraph wires crossing and inter-crossing the country and gradually weaving, as it were, a close net-work over the vast continent, I see the annihilation of space and the removal of the first and the most potent—because not brought about by man—factor that militates against the consolidation of the Indian people. With the rapid spread of the English language, or as a result of the consequent conscious effort to bring an all-Indian vernacular into use, the language obstacle will disappear. Owing to the spread of western culture and the powerful sway of a neutral Government, the religious difficulty, never very considerable even at its worst, has practically vanished already. Caste alone remains, a grim and mighty demon with a hundred hands all filled to overflowing with the seeds of dissension; four immense protruding eyes of different colours, but each jaundiced, and each flashing jealousy and hatred at the rest; a score of tongues all blustering and babbling simultaneously of hoary traditions, customs and rights, louder and more confused than Babel after the curse; and numerous cloven feet wallowing in the mire of selfishness and avarice. Not that the demon has remained altogether untouched by the new forces working around him: the fresh west-wind is gradually drying up the mire in which he stands, and the seeds of dissension do not sprout up half so readily now; his fearful eyes have lost some of their fury and his tongues too are not so incessantly wagging; but he is still a mighty demon and has been but little influenced by the new order of things, and until he is somehow overcome, there is no possibility of a united India.

Let me now briefly point out a few ways in which caste directly obstructs national union. I may here clear up a common

confusion by which the misbegotten foundlings of caste are often laid at the innocent doors of religion. All great religions are based on the primary axiom of the universal equality and brotherhood of man. This statement will not be challenged as regards Christianity or Islam or that great Indian "Man-ism," which has been exiled from the land of its birth by what may be termed the process of "assimilation and expulsion," and whose royal founder begged a lota of milk to quench his mortal thirst from a "low-caste" cow-boy in these words:—

> "Pity and need
> Make all flesh kin. There is no caste in blood,
> Which runneth of one hue, nor caste in tears,
> Which trickle salt with all; neither comes man
> To birth with tilka-mark stamped on the brow,
> Nor sacred thread on neck. Who doth right deed
> Is twice-born, and who doeth ill deeds vile;
> Give me to drink, my brother."

Hinduism alone is considered as sanctioning caste and its differences between man and man. But it is a religion on a graded scale and caste distinctions are recognised only in its lower parts and in a quasi-religious manner, and even there, not to the extent to which it has been pushed in practice by selfishness and custom.

"The sage looketh equally on a perfectly learned and humble Brahman, a cow, an elephant, and even a dog, and a Svapaka;" (the lowest class of outcastes) says the *Gita*; and if we look at the lists of the saints of even the most orthodox sects of Hinduism, we are at once convinced that religion is not responsible for the barbed-wire barriers of caste and does not countenance them. The sixty-three Sivaite saints worshipped by all Hindus with divine honours annually at Mylapore and in other famous shrines in South India and whose images are to be found in almost every considerable Sivaite temple, belonged to the following castes:—

Brahmans	17	The twice-born castes.
Kshattriyas... ..	6	
Vaisyas	5	

Princes of other castes ...	5	Sudras and other "low-castes," including members of classes regarded practically as outcastes.
Sudras (Vellalas) ...	13	
Shepherds	2	
Potter	1	
Drummer	1	
Dancing-master ...	1	
Huntsman	1	
Weaver	1	
Oilmonger	1	
Toddy-drawer ...	1	
Egali	1	
Pulaya	1	
Caste unknown ...	6	

Turning to Vaishnavite saints who are worshipped by all with no less honour and reverence, I need only mention Thirumangai Alwar, a Kulla by caste, and Thiruppani Alwar, a Panchama, to prove my contention. Says Kabir, a disciple of Ramananda, who was a friend and disciple of the great Ramanuja :—" What avails it to wash your mouth, to count your beads, to bathe in holy streams, to bow in temples, if, whilst you mutter your prayers or journey on pilgrimage, deceitfulness is in your heart? The Hindu fasts on every eleventh day; the Mussulman on the Ramzan. Who formed the remaining months and days, if you should venerate but one? If the Creator dwell in tabernacles, whose dwelling is the Universe? The city of the Hindu God is to the east (Benares), the city of the Mussulman God is to the west (Mecca); but explore your own heart, for there is the God, both of the Mussulmans and of the Hindus. Behold but One in all things; He to whom the world belongs, He is the father of the worshippers alike of Rama and of Ali. He is my guide, He is my priest." Surely the superstitions and ordinances of caste cannot be saddled on the religion of the Hindus and the fact that men like Vivekananda who break every caste-regulation with impunity are not treated as beyond the pale of Hinduism, but rather as its expounders, distinctly proves that caste is not indispensable to our religion. Nay, more, a man cannot strictly observe all the rules and restrictions of caste and yet be truly humane and religious, and the real cause of most of the sectarian

disputes, quarrels and affrays will be found to lie in the jealousies and hatreds of caste.

Truly, therefore, does Goethe make the Pariah pray in the following words :—

"Dreaded Brahma, lord of might!
All proceed from thee alone;
Thou art he who judgeth right!
Dost thou none but Brahmans own?
Do but Rajahs come from thee?
None but those of high estate?
Didst not thou the ape create,
Aye, and even such as we?

We are not of noble kind,
For with woe our lot is rife;
And what others deadly find
Is our only source of life.
Let this be enough for men,
Let them, if they will, despise us;
But thou, Brahma, thou shouldst prize us,
All are equal in thy ken."

And later on the great poet puts these noble words into the mouth of his transformed Brahmin heroine*:—

"None is in His eyes the meanest—
He whose limbs are lame and palsied,
He whose soul is wildly riven,
Worn with sorrow, hopeless, helpless,
Be he Brahman, be he Pariah,
If toward heaven he turns his gaze,
Will perceive, will learn to know it:
Thousand eyes are glowing yonder,
Thousand ears are calmly list'ning,
From which nought below is hid."

If caste-regulations are thus found contrary to the precepts and practice of true religion, their effects are even more pernicious politically and socially, for while religious fervour among us is often more than a match for caste, the spirit of self-sacrifice and patriotism is seldom strong enough to grapple with it and so we rather bear the bonds we wear than seek the freedom whose advan-

* Goethe narrates the legend of *Mathangi*—see the *Madras Christian College Magazine* for December, 1905—*Pamba, Ed.*

tages we know not of. I shall first speak of the restrictions which *regulate the treatment of the "lower" by the "higher"* classes and make physical contact, and even approach within a certain distance, penal pollutions. I have heard these restrictions defended by some of my theosophical friends—members of a society whose first principle is universal brotherhood—on the score of higher and lower magnetisms, and I should not wonder if principles of sanitation and quarantine are next brought in and urged in their favour. Though these restrictions are not so patent in practice in towns and cities, they are in full force in the rural parts of the country, and in most South Indian villages certain classes are prohibited from entering Brahman streets and using wells and tanks resorted to by the "twice-born" castes. Dogs and cattle and vermin pass freely through these streets, but these human beings who sweat and toil day and night, ill clad and worse fed, to fill the mouths of the men, women and children within the houses on either side, are not allowed the same privilege. No kind of food or eatable substance to which water has been added at any stage of its preparation can be given by a Brahman to a non-Brahman, without what is left after such a giving becoming polluted and unfit for his own consumption. The superstition and ignorance of Brahmin women carry this rule to such extremities, that they often behave in the most inhuman manner and this, alas! in the name of virtue and piety, and let me state it to their credit, with the utmost sincerity. Is this not an insult to humanity? As I am writing this, I hear the howls and cries of a Nayadi from amidst the paddy-fields entreating the passers-by on the far-off road which he cannot approach, to fling a copper piece at him by way of alms, and I see and hear a Brahman shouting out an expletive to warn off his path the Panchama wretch walking on it at a distance. United India, indeed! Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao said that of all civilized nations we, Hindus, suffer most from self-inflicted and, *therefore*, avoidable evils. I say that of all educated people, we who clamour for better treatment and greater political privileges are the most shameless on the face of the earth; and no one can doubt the justice and mercy of the benign Providence who notes how it has freed the "lower" classes from the *Political* sway of the "higher," in this caste-ridden country.

It would be sickening and tedious to detail the innumerable ways in which these touch-restrictions of caste affect our daily life at every step, and sap our feelings of sympathy and good-will to our fellow-beings and inspire us instead with pride and contempt on the one side, and self-humiliation, hatred and envy on the other. It is plain that no common national feeling is possible in such circumstances and no *esprit de corps* can spring up or be developed. But with the Christian Missionary and other influences and forces at work around, this state of affairs will not long continue and I dread to think what my brethren, the "high-castes," will do when these "low-castes" are permanently estranged from us, when they no more tremble and prostrate themselves in abject and willing subjection, when these "hands" of our social organism refuse to work for us, or dictate their own terms and conditions. While their present state is a disgrace to our civilisation and culture, our treatment of them has a most baneful moral effect on ourselves; and by exercising such unresisted tyranny, we become more and more unfit to enjoy freedom; and by such constant callousness to all humane and just feelings, we sink lower and lower in shameless selfishness and moral lethargy.

I shall next pass on to the restrictions regarding eating.

These are even more numerous and elaborate and more stringently adhered to and enforced in South India than those regulating touch and approach. No Brahman can drink or eat anything prepared or even seen by a non-Brahman, and among the Brahmans themselves, there are countless restrictions regulating the preparation of food and inter-dining and there are some people who will not eat in the houses of their closest kinsmen. I may here mention that in all such caste-regulations the lower classes pay the higher the compliment of imitating them and my imagination refuses to engage in the stupendous task of conceiving and realising to itself the thousands of minute and detailed rules, restrictions and prohibitions about the preparation and partaking of food which obtain among the hundreds of castes in this country, from the highest Brahmans to the lowest outcastes. And I hold that no Indian who loves his country should ever undertake such a task even in the interests of sociology, for the revelation would for ever lose us what little regard and reputation for civilisation

and intelligence we now enjoy with our western brothers, who have but a very superficial knowledge of these affairs at present.

I would remind the reader that I am not now speaking of the barriers between vegetarians and non-vegetarians, but only of those which keep apart people accustomed to the same kinds of food, prepared more or less in the same manner.

I have often heard it said that free inter-dining is not quite necessary for mutual sympathy and good-feeling and that people who cannot mess together can still be close friends and comrades in a common cause. I will not question the physical or the theoretical possibility of this, but I do contend that free inter-dining which, by the way, appears to have been in vogue among our fore-fathers, is too powerful a promoter of mutual sympathy and understanding to be lightly despised or neglected, and its prohibition and the restrictions about the preparation and partaking of food are too great an inconvenience in modern life to be any longer tolerated. There should be no prohibitions against Indians inter-dining freely among themselves and with others on the ground of caste, whatever objections there may be in particular cases owing to other reasons.

The value and potency of inter-dining as a social factor cannot be easily over-estimated. The fact that among almost all communities of human beings, savage or civilised, a social meal is invested with a religious importance and often has a ratifying or consummating force on such occasions as births, marriages and deaths, and that other fact that some tribes, treacherous and wicked by nature, will not hurt, nay, will even protect at the risk of their own lives any one with whom they may have partaken of a meal, will sufficiently bear this out. Monarch and mendicant, saint and sinner are alike subject to the craving of hunger, and a subtle, levelling feeling of equality and sympathy, a sense of comradeship in a pleasant gratification, seems to prevail when men sit together and appease the fiend that gnaws at their insides periodically and with a regularity like clock-work. The kinship of all human flesh is vividly recognised on such occasions and while the prince feels that he is no more privileged than the beggar, the sinner knows that even the saint is subject to the same frailty. Further, the way to most men's hearts, even though no English blood may run in their veins, is through their stomachs, and a good

dinner is an excellent promoter of familiarity and friendliness. Good humour inevitably prevails after a good dinner and many a man is then seen at his best. Not without reason are the embryonic barristers hatched round a dinner-table and not without reason has the genial American made his autocrat, his professor and his poet pour out their wit and wisdom at the breakfast-board. In fact, many volumes might be written on the merits of a social meal and its achievements in ancient and modern times and how the destinies of empires have been swayed by its influence. But we caste-ridden Hindus yet know not the potentialities of inter-dining, how it is a pledge of comradeship and how it helps to cement existing friendly feelings and create mutual sympathy and understanding where none existed, or, rather, we have given it so much importance and consider it so great a privilege that we deny it to all but our own immediate kin and thus divide ourselves into hundreds of social islands instead of uniting into a healthy, compact whole, capable of great achievements and progress. The inconveniences and disadvantages of these interdictions are most felt by those who have to leave their homes and travel about the country on business or for pleasure. Our social, industrial, religious and political gatherings were the cultured of the different and distant parts of the country come together to discuss the ways and means of our improvement and progress, fail to realise even a moiety of what is actually possible in such intelligent meetings owing to the caste rules obtaining among the delegates and the visitors. Even more of possible good, literally invaluable as a social cement, is lost in our schools, colleges and hostels for students where, at a most impressionable age, the young men are not permitted to mix and associate freely and cultivate a feeling of national unity and pride. These caste distinctions and restrictions are thus perpetuated and fostered at the very time when they should be forgotten and ignored, and our young men enter the arena of life with much insular pride and bias and with the least possible feeling of brotherhood and sympathy with their fellow-countrymen.

Then there is the prohibition of sea-voyages imposed by caste rules. The Indo-Aryans had long lost touch with the sea and forgotten everything about it before they settled down in this country and their pastoral habits and life turned their fancies to

imagining oceans of milk, and curd, and ghee, and honey, and such myths. In India, they found all that they required to render life easy and pleasant, and the mighty Indian ocean was singularly devoid of rich and tempting "emerald isles" within easy distance of the mainland. No wonder, they never developed any sea-faring capacity or engaged in any long voyages to distant coasts. They feared and worshipped the sea, but never attempted, having no necessity therefor, to master it and put it to their own use and advantage. But those primitive days are gone now and for ever, and the sea-faring nations dominate the world. To keep abreast of the altered times, nay, even to keep off the ever-pressing famine and feed the ever-multiplying mouths at home, we have to go abroad and learn the secrets of numerous industries and trades, unknown or decayed amongst us. The question of sea-voyage is one of imminent importance for our national welfare and young men will not be ready to overcome the domestic instinct inherited in the blood for several thousands of years and venture abroad for a life of arduous study and pursuit of knowledge under all kinds of imaginable difficulties and obstacles, if they are to be treated as out-castes and shunned by their very parents and kinsmen on their return. The "lowest" castes who alone labour under no such prohibition against a sea-voyage have neither the means to undertake it nor the intelligence to profit by it. If we desire to learn and assimilate all that is wise and skilful and noble in the civilisation of England, France, Germany, America and Japan, and at the same time impress the minds of the peoples of those countries with our own mental and moral worth and thus win their esteem and sympathy, it is necessary we should send out only our very best products to them, the topmost cream of Indian civilisation. And it is exactly this topmost cream "the highest" caste, that suffers most from the restrictions against sea-voyages and is thus unable to go abroad. The problem is a grave one and one on which hangs the ultimate destiny of our country to a great extent, and unless the caste-fiend is speedily floored, or coaxed and metamorphosed into a more reasonable animal, it cannot be solved easily.

The caste rules regulating marriage, I have reserved to the last. The question of inter-marriage between members of different main castes is not within the sphere of practical politics at

present and such marriages, barring exceptional cases, will result in serious harm and evil and no good, for numerous generations to come, that is, until our social state is considerably changed and presents a more equal and uniform character in its different component parts. Meanwhile, there is yeoman service to be done in *removing the restrictions obtaining among the same castes* and even sub-castes and bringing about free inter-marriage within each main caste. Besides the physiological evils resulting from too narrow a limit in the selection of brides and grooms, there is a more important and pressing economic side to this problem, for many a family is practically ruined by having to pay highly for the choice of a selection within the particular sphere prescribed. This evil is most glaringly illustrated among the Kulin Brahmans of Bengal, but notably instances are not wanting even in South India. Free inter-marriages between the different sub-castes will tend to consolidate the main castes far more powerfully than free inter-dining can do, and even such a widening of the boundaries and demolition of the minor fences will be a great step towards the realisation of a common nationality, for, in the place of the hundreds of different and mutually jealous units we shall then have less than a dozen to deal with. Again, there are the caste rules prescribing the marriageable age for boys and girls in different castes, which, though often found to be against *shastraic* injunctions, are held inviolable in practice owing to long prevalence. The "higher" classes suffer most from such restrictions at present, and they have earned the appellation of "a baby-born nation" and are deteriorating physically, mentally, and morally owing to infant and too-early marriages. Urgent reform is called for in this direction and it wants only moral courage to break an old, unreasonable custom, and some unity of action to raise the marriageable age of boys and girls and thus, by a single step, to rid ourselves of manifold evils and troubles. The heart-rending cruelties and other evils connected with the widow question also originate from caste rules and custom. The *shastras* afford ample scope for reform and the rusty fetters of caste and custom alone now retard all progress, and the sooner they are broken the better it will be for us as a nation.

To sum up, then: the institution of caste which came into being naturally, and, in its days of vital elasticity and adaptive-

ness, helped the advancement of civilisation on different lines in this country, and enabled the Hindus to preserve their individuality through various political and religious mishaps and reverses, has, owing to the inevitable corruption of ages, lost most of its virtues and developed many an unlooked-for and unexpected evil, and is entirely unsuited to the altered circumstances of life in India and the higher ideal of national unity and combined harmonious progress which the Indian peoples have now set before themselves. To attain this ideal and achieve this progress, it is necessary to liberate religion, unifying and noble in itself, from the distinctions and trammels of caste, and so to revise and modify the rules and regulations of ordinary life now in force as to remove all unreasonable and insulting distinctions and barriers between man and man and to promote friendly sympathy, free intercourse and sincere comradeship among the citizens of the future united Indian Empire. The "higher" classes have now to justify their assumed title and superiority by their willing and noble surrender of their exclusive and unique privileges in a truly patriotic spirit, and by their willing and noble efforts to raise up to their proper and due level their long-oppressed and less-fortunate "lower" brethren. This is the sacrifice and this is the service which their beloved mother-country demands of them and may they not be found lukewarm or false in their filial duties!

Though the present crisis in the history of the Indian peoples has been brought about by the spread of western culture and the adoption of western ideals, revolt against caste tyranny is not really so new or modern as it may appear. Students of Buddhism know that the Sakya Prince was more a social and religious Hindu reformer than the prophet of a strange and unknown faith. The lives and doctrines of many another founder of the current sects and sub-sects reveal the same fact. I cannot better close this paper on *Caste* than by narrating the traditional story of Kapilar and giving an abridged rendering of his reputed poetical address to his persecutors, hitherto known only to students of Tamil literature.

When Ugra Pandya was ruling the Tamil Country more than fifteen centuries ago or, perhaps, even much earlier, there was a Brahman of the Chozhya sub-caste named Bagavan, and

he became enamoured of the charms of a Pulaya woman of Karur, named Adi. Love first conquered caste scruples, as it does in numerous instances to this day, and the Brahman gave vent to his passion. But the affair soon got wind in the village and he was out-casted and persecuted. So he left the village with his Pulaya sweet-heart and wandered about in villages and towns where they were not known. But he was anxious that the issue of his sweet but degrading union should not encumber him and perpetuate *varna samkara* (confusion of castes) and so he stipulated with his mistress beforehand that he would wander about in her company only if she consented to abandon each child as soon as it was born. This, she at first agreed to; but, when a child was born and she had to abandon it, her fond maternal heart bled in grief and it needed a miracle each time to enable her to keep her promise. This miracle happened in this manner: when the mother, urged by her husband on the one side and by her natural instinct on the other, was weeping over the child in bitter agony, the infant lips suddenly opened and consoled her with words of wisdom embodied in a Tamil stanza, which allayed her grief and emboldened her to depart with her Brahmin lord. Four daughters and three sons were the issue of this curious union and I translate below some of the stanzas of these infant prodigies. Ouvai, the greatest female name in Tamil literature, was the first-born, and is said to have consoled her weeping mother in these words:—

"Is He dead, that Siva, who, of His own will, wrote my fate upon my head? Fear not, O mother, for His is the providing care even in the worst famines."

The above stanza is sometimes attributed to her brother Adigaman, and Ouvai is said to have sung the following stanza:

"Is there a God or not to protect all living beings and am I not one of them? O mother! Why do you lament vainly, for fate is inevitable?"

This poetess has given her opinion about castes in a famous Tamil stanza which lays down that there are only two castes in the world—the noble givers and the ignoble non-givers. Tiruvalluvar, the best-known name in Tamil literature, whose immortal work has been translated into most of the European

languages, was the last issue of the union and the stanza attributed to him is as follows :—

"That God of Truth who lovingly nourishes the embryo within the womb and the toad beneath the rock, will He not protect me, an embodied being? O fond and foolish mother, be glad and grieve not for me."

I may remark, in passing, that this poet, though of the lowest caste, is accorded saintly honours, is by some regarded as an *avatar* of Brahma, and his work is devoutly called the Tamil Veda. The stanza attributed to Kapilar, the bold social reformer, seems quite characteristic of him. He asks his weeping mother :—

"He who nourished me from the day of my conception to this day with water and food and protected me from evil, has He died now? Or has He gone to sleep? Or, tell me, O mother, has His heart too become as hard as yours who seekest to abandon thy child?"

The same liberal spirit and righteous indignation prevail in his *Agaval*, which was composed in the following circumstances. Kapilar was picked up and brought up by a childless Brahman of Tiruvarur with great affection and when he was of the proper age, his foster-father sought to invest him with the holy thread and thus take him into the Brahmin caste.

As the child's real parents and his caste were not known, the other Brahmans of Tiruvarur objected to this and at the boy's own request, an assembly of this orthodox party was convened and he addressed them in these words :—

"When we begin to speak of the great excellence and purpose of the different worlds created by the four-faced Brahma, who can say whether the male or the female of the asexual principle was the oldest? Was there star or planet, at first? Did evil or good first come into being? Which is more excellent, riches or learning? Is this grand old earth a creation or a self-existing phenomenon? Is all existence created or natural? Do men wear out and die, or is death a mere false show? Will evil ever die out of the world or not? When men die, what do the five senses do and where do they go? Does penance change a man's birth? Which is it that absorbs the nutriment, the body or the life in the body? O ye people of the world! O ye people of the

world! Listen to me, listen to what I proclaim with the trumpet of my tongue: man's life is but a hundred years; of these, fifty are nights spent in sleep; infancy absorbs five years and youthhood fifteen; thus deducting seventy, only thirty years remain. Of these, there are some days of happiness and some days of sorrow and suffering. Prosperity is like a river in full flood, and youth resembles its crumbling banks, and our days are like the trees standing on these banks, liable to be washed away at any moment. Therefore, we should do some one great thing in this life; and that one thing must be good and that good thing must be done to-day. For, if you delay, saying we will do it to-morrow and to-morrow, you know not whether the morrow will be death's or yours. The god of death may come at any moment and when he comes, he will not go away with empty coaxing and even worship; he will not be bribed with money; he will not yield to flattery; he will not accept the life of another relative instead; the rich and the poor, the good and the evil are alike to him; the cruel god will not wait even a second; and he will depart with life only, refusing and abandoning the body. O ye poor, ignorant people, will ye then bemoan the loss of the life or the loss of the body? If ye say you weep for the loss of the life, did you ever see the life or anything else but the body? And then you will strip that lifeless body and tie it by the hands and the legs, even as if it were a thief, and burn it to ashes and then bathe and mourn with your kindred. Will such conduct be considered foolish or wise? And O ye Brahmans, listen to me: When the sons of the dead regard you as the *manes* of their forefathers, and with many make-believe *mantras* feed you well, who hath ever witnessed the return of the dead and their hands hungrily stretched out for the offerings? Whose hunger is appeased by the food eaten? There are no Brahmans in the many countries of the Ottyars, the Mlechas, the Huns, the Singalese, the Chonakas, the Yavanas, and the Chinese; but you have established these four castes in this land. The natural order is only two—the noble and the mean. The cow and the buffalo are different in birth; no one has seen them cross and produce offspring. But in the human species which you have divided into four castes, do you not see offspring by the union of the different castes? The seed and the

harvest will never differ; none has seen them vary. Are not the children of Pulaya women by Brahman husbands also Brahmans by birth? Who has ever seen men differ in person like the cow and the buffalo? Neither in age, nor in organs, nor in body, colour, or intelligence, is any difference patent among men. The Pulaya of the south will become a Brahman if he goes to the north and learns the Vedas; and the Brahman of the north will be considered a Pulaya in the south on account of his habits and mode of life. Leaving this aside, Vasishta, born of a prostitute to Brahma; Satya, born of a *chandali* to Vasishta; Parasara, born of a Pulaya woman to Satya, and Vyasa, born of a fisher-woman to Parasara, did not these four men, like lotuses born in the mire, learn the Vedas, and, attaining spiritual greatness, shine in the world as the greatest of sages? * * * * * * I have been brought up by a Brahman in Tiruvarur. Now, does the rain withhold its showers from some people? Does the wind refrain from blowing on some people? Does the earth refuse to bear the weight of some people? Does the sun refuse to shine on some people? Do the four favoured castes obtain their food in the towns and villages, and others in the jungle? Riches and poverty, the fruits of good deeds and death, are alike to all human beings. There is but one caste and one abode, one birth and one death, and there is but one God for all. Therefore, always give alms to the needy; eschew animal food, murder and theft; keep firm hold of the eternal *dharma*; and know that the soul is neither male nor female. Do not disregard my earnest words, O ye ignorant men, for moral excellence and good deeds alone can help you and mere birth (in any caste) can never be of any real good to you."

The authenticity and great antiquity of the above poem are doubted by some persons who thus seek to discredit it altogether. Truth is truth to the end of the reckoning and will always command allegiance, irrespective of the lips that proclaim it. But the following extracts from the great law-giver Manu and other ancient authorities have never been discredited:—

"By his conduct a Sudra becomes a Brahman, and a Brahman a Sudra. Know that this applies to the Kshattryas and the Vaisyas as well." (*Manu X.* 65).

"O King of the Nagas! He alone is a Brahman in whom

shine truth, charity, virtue, peace, meditation, and pity for all living beings. The Sudra who has them is not a Sudra, and the Brahman who has them not is not a Brahman." (*The Mahabharata—Vanaparva*, 180)

"Caste should be determined not by looking at a man's birth, but by the qualities which his conduct indicates." (*Vishnu Bhagavata VII.-XI.* 35)

" Birth, sanctifying rites, the study of the Vedas, caste, these cannot make a Brahman; conduct alone confers Brahmanhood."

These noble sayings are unmistakable and relentlessly candid and no honest caste-man who professes to be orthodox and to be guided by the ancient *Shastras* can consistently ignore them. It may be conceded that the system of caste has powerfully helped certain classes of the Hindus to attain a high degree of moral culture and spirituality; but it must also be remembered that this system is directly responsible for the squalid slavery aud barbarism into which certain other classes have sunk and in which they still remain. It is, however, plain that at the present day and in its present form, caste can do us little good and is doing us immeasurable harm in manifold ways, and hangs by our necks like a dead weight, ready to drown us for ever if we do not cast it off while yet we have strength enough for it. It is only a tool with which our forefathers worked, not the ripe fruit of their labours. That fruit is buried deep and safe in our moral and spiritual essence and will, by and by, sprout up and grow into a mighty king of the forest and bear fruit in its turn a million-fold in the fulness of time; meanwhile we shall be acting foolishly and not help ourselves much if we keep playing with the worn-out, unavailing tool which only hurts our hands and cripples our capacity for work and do not shape for ourselves a useful and up-to-date instrument. The old order hath changed and a new, and, let me hope, a nobler era has dawned on our dear mother-land, and we who have imbibed the new spirit must act in the light of our new knowledge and hasten, not with an ungrateful or unsympathetic hand, the removal of all that is no longer useful or healthy. The time has come when, in the stirring words of the last great poet, it is our sacred duty and privilege to

"Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;

Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws . . .
" Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite ;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good . . .
"*Ring in the valiant man and free,*
The larger heart, the kindlier hand
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the *Light* that is to be."

PATRIOTISM.

"Let Rama rule or Ravana, what care we?"—*Indian Proverb.*

PATRIOTISM means literally the love of father-land, the partiality and affection for the institutions and ideals bequeathed by one's *forefathers. And this love is not the private and personal* one which an individual entertains for his own ancestral fields and estates and his family traditions, but the more or less altruistic love for one's native country and for its common institutions *and ideals. No doubt, the sentiment has been gradually evolved* out of such personal predilections and the ancestor-worship common to most nations, but it has long ceased to be personal and is essentially communal at present. Though the word has acquired a wide range of connotation in *practical usage, as wide as the* different levels of civilisation attained and the ideals cherished by the several nations, and though, within the same community, the numerous conflicting parties and sects claim each to be more truly patriotic than all the rest, yet there is no *great divergence* of opinion as to the root-idea of the term. Every patriot professes to love his country and to care for its interests more than for anything else and is proud of his national bequests and traditions; it is only in the manifestation of this love and the *interpretation* of what these bequests and traditions truly are, that men differ. In action, the patriotic sentiment is essentially altruistic and deliberately places the public good before the private advantage. Herein lies its magnetic charm and power over the popular mind and herein is to be found the reason why the most diverse human motives sometimes put on the mask of patriotism. Therefore has this sentiment been regarded by some as the noblest that can animate the breast of man and described by others as the last refuge of a scoundrel. The mighty autocrat whose nod of displeasure tears off from their beloved homes, and exiles to the freezing wilds of distant Siberia, a whole host of hungry peasants or offending nobles, the reckless *nihilist who prowls about with his pockets* filled with deadly bombs and shells to have a throw at the 'Father of the people,' the brave soldier who, with wounds unhealed,

abandons his weeping wife and children and rushes up to the cannon's mouth at the call of the trumpet, the inhuman murderer who, with the halter round his neck, bequeaths to his country the few coins he has acquired by robbery, the noble statesman who is ever ready to wash out with his very life-blood the tiniest speck of dishonour or shame on his country's scutcheon, and the scheming and ambitious politician who seeks, by fair means or foul, to advance his country's interests and his own and scruples not to shed the blood of innocent thousands or deny common justice to a weaker community in pursuit of ignoble greed or ambition, the rajah and the rebel, the oppressor and the oppressed, all claim to be patriots, staunch and true. Patriotism is, indeed, the secular counterpart of religion and has given birth to an almost equal number of fanatics. The noblest deeds of heroism and the vilest iniquities and crimes have been witnessed under the shadow of its magic banner and will continue to be enacted as long as altruism, true or false, has any charm for man.

Though primarily a generic term, patriotism has acquired a distinct political significance and is more commonly used in connection with political institutions and activities. Literature and science, philosophy and religion, are of more permanent value and importance and are regarded as the common heirlooms of all mankind and not as the peculiar entail of individual nations. Intellectual treasure has the supreme advantage of enlarging and increasing, not diminishing, by distribution and participation, and the war of competing interests and the outwittings and intrigues of mutually jealous communities are therefore happily confined to the domain of material wealth. Politics has thus become the peculiar element of patriotism, the sentiment not being quite absent from other pursuits of life notwithstanding.

Let us now look a little more closely at this patriotic sentiment. The love of our father-land and of the institutions and traditions we are born heir to, need not necessarily mean the hatred of other lands and other systems and opinions. But all love is blind and partial and we love a thing not because it is as good as another, but because we think it is better than all others of the kind we know of. Weaker love than this is not worth the name and cannot have much grit in it. And as, in this case, the object of love is no other than oneself, one's country and one's

national heritage, the sentiment is rooted in egotism and selfishness. Further, material wealth is strictly limited in quantity and its possession and distribution are encompassed by rigorous economic laws which no ingenuity can alter or evade. The gain of one nation is often the loss of another, and in the keen struggle for existence and predominance among the nations of the world, as among individuals, equity and justice often go to the wall and even the most conscientious mistake might for right. The sentiment of patriotism is but the outward expression of communal egotism and avarice and is therefore a very doubtful virtue. It is a virtue in as much as it induces the citizen to make personal sacrifice for the benefit of his country at large and it is a vice in as much as it tends to blind him to the nobler cause of "the brotherhood of man and the federation of the world." The selfish and grasping epicure has for his motto, "Each man for himself and God for all, and especially for *me* if I can only so prevail on Him," and the honest patriot has for his motto, "Each country for itself and God for all, and especially for *mine* if I can only so prevail on Him." Both are unjust and selfish in their motives and means, and differ only in their ultimate aims. If patriotism be really a masked vice, mere greed "in grain veneered with sanctimonious theory," how, it may be asked, has it commanded the allegiance of many of the greatest characters in all history and hallowed their names with immortal glory? Will it not be an insult to humanity and civilisation to presume that some of the giant intellects of the earth have deliberately subjected their minds to an ignoble and vicious principle and given the best parts of their lives to its cause, without an adequate reason? The fact that patriots are honoured and deified mostly in their own countries and are often vilely abused and anathematised in the histories of the nations whom they sought to outwit or subdue, will indicate that the patriot's fame is essentially national and partial. The other side of the shield of his character, painted by his smarting enemies, is often as dark and ugly as his native side is splendid and beautiful. But the reason we search for lies deeper than this. It is the common experience of mankind that universal and promiscuous altruism is not productive of much good to anybody, nor sufficiently powerful to draw out the best qualities of the generality of men. A certain amount of selfishness is found necessary in actual life,

nay it is impossible to eliminate selfishness altogether from human motives. The greatest happiness of the greatest number is secured more easily and naturally by each man endeavouring within certain limitations, to secure his own happiness, than by his busying himself exclusively with the happiness of others, sacrificing his own at every step. This golden mean is indispensable in the lives of nations as of individuals, and it is this which justifies patriotism and raises it to the rank of a noble virtue. These premises are tacitly recognised by all nations, and patriotism is therefore never condemned or called by its plain name. But its true nature, and its honourableness derived only from necessity, should never be forgotten by those who would not knowingly stray from the high-road of righteousness, which alone exalteth a nation. The moment the golden mean is violated, the moment that ambition and selfishness seal the eyes of the patriot to justice and humanity, the garb of glory becomes a filthy and loathsome rag and the great moral law of the universe is violently breached. The patriotism of a nation is but its own pathway to the common goal of all nations, and it confers no right of encroachment or blockade on any particular nation.

Having spoken thus far of patriotism in general, I shall now deal with it with special reference to my country and countrymen. A little thinking will easily convince any one that patriotism cannot take root in any soil un-fertilised by mutual sympathy and un-watered by mutual trust and friendliness. And to bring about these conditions, unity of race, language, religion, government, social customs and institutions, and free intercourse among the people, are indispensable. It is of the very essence of patriotism to feel and sacrifice for your own and not for the man who is practically a stranger to you and whose language, beliefs, customs and opinions are different from yours. The example of the Jews who, though scattered all over the world, do not anywhere feel real patriotism for the country of their sojourn, and are almost everywhere persecuted as strangers by the peoples of the different countries, will forcibly illustrate this point. I may safely assert, therefore, that the patriotic sentiment, as ordinarily understood in other countries, was and is practically non-existent in India considered as a whole, single country. But no community can hold together without such a sentiment, nay, it could not have

become a community without some such feeling. We find in India therefore, in the place of the patriotic sentiment, the equally strong and binding feeling of clannishness or caste and there breathes no Indian, with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said, "This is my own, my ancient caste." This peculiar caste-feeling is Indian patriotism and it is quite different from what is regarded as patriotism by other nations. A Brahman of Cape Comorin feels more sympathy for another Brahman, may-be an utter stranger, from the Himalayan slopes, than for his Sudra neighbour with whom and whose ancestors he and his own ancestors have dwelt in the same village from time immemorial, and such fellow-feeling prevails among all the castes. This caste-patriotism has developed certain distinct virtues and ideal types in India which are not to be matched anywhere else in the world, virtues and ideals, however, in which there is no trace of an all-Indian patriotic sentiment as understood in other lands; and while the recognition of common interests and the feeling of fellow-citizenship have brought other nations into existence and raised them to a high pitch of national efficiency and prosperity, there was, until the other day, no Indian nation even in name. Vast continents and innumerable islands, thousands of miles away from their tiny, isolated home, have been colonised and subdued in the name of Britain, by British hearts that freely shed their blood like water for their country, under the shadow of the British flag. British ships roam the blue seas all over the world and the British banner is promptly planted and unfurled on any acre of earth unclaimed or newly discovered, and a British name is given to it as a hall-mark of possession and ownership. I have taken as an example the nation which has been the most successfully patriotic in modern times. Look at India on the other hand. Ever since the dawn of history her sons have practically realised the proverbial fate of a house divided against itself; the several inhabitants of even a small hamlet have no common platform of sympathy and co-operation but represent numerous conflicting and mutually jealous interests. The reasons for this state of things in India are partly historical and partly social. Even in the days of the *Mahabharata*, when no foreigner had yet set foot in *Aryavarta*, the country was divided into innumerable principalities ruled over by chiefs each of whom claimed to be no less than a

Thrailokyanath or 'Lord of the three worlds,' and tried to obtain for himself as much out of the other chiefs as possible, by force or fraud. South-Indian traditions speak of fifty-six kingdoms in India or perhaps south of the Vindya mountains alone, and the present Madras Presidency was ruled over by a dozen chiefs or more, not many centuries ago. As the territorial extent of these principalities was constantly varying, some of them sometimes wholly disappearing owing to absorption by others, and as the ruling chiefs were often at war with each other, there were no common interests of sufficient importance and permanence to create a spirit of patriotism among the people. The autocratic nature of the government in vogue was not propitious to the birth of any such spirit, and what little *esprit de corps* there was among the village communities was confined to each village and there was no feeling of a common country or nationality. But, above all, the prevailing differences in language and religion, the rigid rules and restrictions of caste preventing fellow-feeling and sympathy between the different castes and sub-castes, and the conflicting and multitudinous varieties of social customs and caste privileges and rights, rendered a common feeling of patriotism quite impossible. Caste having originated in calling, and most castes having thus become incapable of living by themselves and forming individual communities in any separate localities without the co-operation and professional help of other castes, distinct nationalities based on caste-feeling alone could not come into existence. To form a self-sufficient community, all the castes were indispensable, and in such a collection there was too much heterogeneity and mutual antipathy for any spirit of patriotism to be engendered. Perpetual disunion thus became inevitable even within the narrowest limits and there was no event in the history of India until a few decades ago to neutralise this innate element of discord and create a feeling of unity and common nationality.

I would not be interpreted as laying the whole blame on caste or crying it down as an unmitigated evil. The occurrences of history were greatly influenced by the social results of the institution of caste and reflected their effects upon it in turn. Further, the system of caste seems to have been deliberately fashioned at an early stage to develop certain definite ideals of

life and no one will deny that it has fulfilled this purpose to a considerable extent. The East is more spiritual than the West and personal discipline and self-refinement seem to have been its aims as opposed to those of social service and social efficiency sought after by the West. Those who interpret the ways of Mother Nature as careful of the type alone and careless of the units, will, no doubt, regard the Western as the more natural and the better ideal, and the present domination of the West over the East may, by them, be cited as a proof of their contention. However this may be, the system of caste seems to have been well adapted for the Eastern ideals and should be credited with the remarkable degree of success attained. Self-abnegation and spirituality have been developed in individuals in the East to an extent which the West does not perhaps even dream of as possible. And if, after all, spirituality is a more precious treasure than the mightiest material civilizations, if utter self-abnegation is a greater blessing than the sway of world-wide empires, one would rather pause and ponder than hastily condemn the Eastern or extol the Western ideals. We know but too well that Western patriotism is extremely egotistic and grasping, that Mammon and not Christ is its God, that it is often purblind to humanity and even honesty, in its intense ambition and greed. Eastern self-abnegation, on the other hand, is so humble and content, Eastern spirituality so lofty and transcendent and so absorbed in the speculation of the universal and the eternal, and Eastern fatalism so thorough and sincere that, far from feeling resentment or envy, we actually feel pity at times for the moral and spiritual blindness of the West and regret that it knows no better. So long as our souls are free, so long as no man interrupts our dreams of the eternal and the hereafter and our efforts to ascend the spiritual ladder towards the final liberation and bliss, we would rather be rid of the cares and turmoils of the earth and its treasures and we care not whether Rama rules over our corporeal bodies and chattels, or Ravana. "The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. The contacts of the senses, giving cold and heat, pleasure and pain, they come and go, impermanent. The man whom these torment not, balanced in pain and pleasure, tranquil, he is fitted for immortality." * But it seems to me that while caste has developed spirituality

* *The Bhagavad Gita.*—Ed., Pamba.

to a marvellous extent in some and given birth to many true and noble saints, greater by far than the merchant-princes and conquerors of the West, greater even than the noble patriots who have shed their blood in the cause of freedom and conscience, it has accomplished this at an immense and disproportionately heavy cost and it is not therefore an institution to be maintained intact without alteration or adjustment. True, it shall not profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul, but no man has a right to gain his own soul at the expense of the souls and bodies of others of his fellow-men, and any institution which enables one to do this and affords special facilities therefor, cannot be considered just, or beneficial to society. A community of ascetics and saints is almost a contradiction in terms and a mere chimera. The simple days of Vedic sages and *rishis* are gone for ever and nothing can revive them after nearly thirty centuries. May be it is distance that lends enchantment to our backward view and rivets our regretfully lingering vision to that primitive era. Anyhow, *patasalas* and *ashramas* of the ancient type are of the nature of artificial hot-house plants in the twentieth century and cannot thrive in an atmosphere surcharged with steam and electricity. And further, except the Brahmans and some of the higher castes, the vast bulk of the Indian peoples have nothing proud to look back upon in the past, no achievements and glories peculiarly their own. And it is this huge, heterogeneous mass that has to be shaped into the back-bone of the future Indian nation. This brings me to the consideration of ways and means for accomplishing this feat and realising a United India and I shall first speak of the event in Indian history which has given birth to such aspirations and hopes.

I have already said that almost all the elements necessary for consolidating the different peoples of a vast continent like India and making them feel and act as one nation, were absent from the earliest times and there were, on the contrary, many discordant elements in full force, rendering such a common feeling impossible. In fact there was no common platform on which the different castes could work side by side for their mutual advantage, no bond, social, political or religious, uniting them all. A glance at the Indian literatures will bear this out. The purely patriotic portions of the English literature, for example, will cover many bulky

volumes if extracted and printed together, and it is patriotism and not intrinsic merit of a high quality that has placed Kipling so high in the hearts of his countrymen. The sentiment, on the other hand, is quite unknown to the Indian literatures ; and where it does occur rarely, it is extremely limited and parochial or centred in a monarch who specially favoured the bard,—nothing national and truly patriotic in the Western sense. Not that the Indians failed to realise that

> "To every man upon this earth
> Death cometh soon or late."

This was indeed their common conviction from the prince to the beggar, and no one would have been regarded as a hero or a philosopher who enunciated such a trite and self-evident proposition. But they argued far differently and drew far other conclusions from it than the supremacy of the virtue of man's

> " . . . facing fearful odds
> For the ashes of his fathers,
> And the temples of his gods,
> And for the tender mother
> That dandled him to rest,
> And for the wife that nurses
> His baby at her breast,
> And for the holy maidens,
> That feed the eternal flame."

So is it we find the Indian literatures quite barren of patriotic productions, notwithstanding their fertility in other respects.

In the peculiar circumstances of the country and of its many-tongued and multi-raced peoples worshipping different gods and goddesses, government was the only possible bond of union, giving rise to common interests between the different classes of the people and thus paving the way for a more general and comprehensive nationalisation. The Muhammadans were the first considerable conquerors of India, that is, of the numerous kingdoms into which it was divided.. But their customs and civilisation were radically different from those of the Hindus and their strict and fanatical monotheism was directly opposed to the popular, idolatrous polytheism of the conquered peoples. Further, with a notable exception, they rarely deigned to win the affection of

their new subjects and their rule was never sufficiently immediate and close; nor was their empire free sufficiently long from rebellious and internal wars to comprise the whole of India or even a considerable portion of it for any great length of time. For these and other reasons, there was no political awakening of the peoples of India to a sense of common nationality and patriotism during their supremacy. It is a trite historical truth that India as a whole, from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, from the North-west frontier to Burma, never enjoyed a common uniform government such as it has been enjoying under the British flag for some decades now, and the country never before had such a long spell of internal peace and security. The jealousies of castes and creeds and the wars of ambitious kings and chieftains have been almost forgotten, and in their stead, there is a wide and noble toleration and there is a regular, all-powerful government. A secular education imbued with the modern, materialistic spirit of the West has considerably shattered the old dreams and ideals, and educated young India has been brought face to face with the best political institutions and the most flourishing industries of the West, and has perused, with the thrilling eagerness of a romance, the chronicles of their attainments. Of this uniform, all-powerful, peaceful government and of this Western education has been born the new spirit of patriotism, the new feeling of nationality, the new aspiration towards a united Indian nation. The railway, the telegraph and the printing press have hastened the growth of this spirit and the several Indian peoples are yearning for national union and national greatness. That this new spirit should be almost confined at present to the English-educated sons of the land is but natural. How it can be best disseminated throughout the country and how the new aspirations can be best and soonest realised, are the problems this small minority has to solve, and to solve wisely. On their successful solution of these problems depends the future fate of themselves and their mother-land and no Indian can approach this question of practical patriotism with a light or careless heart.

The modern educated Indian whose heart is aglow with the newly kindled fire of patriotism and who yearns to see his countrymen take their rank among the foremost nations of the earth,—a rank due alike to their ancient culture and glory, their

country's vast resources and their own natural intelligence,—finds himself beset on all sides by doubts and fears, difficulties and obstacles. While the patriots of other countries are absorbed in expanding their territorial wealth and influence, or in consolidating and improving former acquisitions, or, again, in fighting the people's cause and enforcing the people's will in their national assemblies, the Indian patriot has far other and even more stupendous tasks to perform. He has first to educate himself and his countrymen for political franchise, evolving order and union out of chaos and discord, and then he has somehow to obtain that franchise from a foreign domination. In their present state, he cannot really love or be proud of his countrymen or his country, but has first to make them worthy of his love, and then alone can his activities bear any semblance to those of the patriots of other lands. And here, at the very outset, arises a serious problem demanding instant solution: he knows and feels that his own education, in respect of which he regards himself as more fortunate than even his glorious forefathers, and the patriotic fire within him, are the direct results of British supremacy, and how could he think of political freedom without appearing selfish and ungrateful? Ingratitude is a vice which even the most callous sinner and the moral sceptic do not care to be taunted with, and his national ethics condemns it as a crime which no penance can ever wipe off. Indeed, how can such a beginning lead to any good? Will not perpetual subordination be nobler than freedom tainted by selfishness and ingratitude? A little thinking will, however, place this in a different light, and the histories of different nations and a due consideration of the higher laws of human progress transcending the ordinary code of relative morality will enable him to solve this initial problem satisfactorily. National freedom, like personal liberty, is a supreme and primary right of existence and nothing that limits it can be other than tentative. This principle is recognised by all civilised nations and by no one better than our present rulers. We have been repeatedly assured by the best hearts and brains of Britain that her connection with India is only of the nature of a sacred temporary trust and that when India shows herself capable of self-government, Britain will be glad and proud to change her ruling hand into a friendly grasp of cordial equality and guidance; nay more, we have been repeat-

edly assured that Britain considers it her duty to train and befit her ward for such independence, and the present political aspirations and hopes prove unmistakably that she has been partly successful in discharging this duty. There can therefore be no question of selfishness or ingratitude in our consciously responding to our guardian's well-meant stimulation and endeavouring to secure for ourselves a primary right of nature. That Britain has never thought of colonising India is a conclusive proof of the more or less temporary nature of her domination as understood by herself, if indeed the explicit and voluntary assurances of her greatest sons needed any such corroboration; and her self-governing colonies seem to foreshadow the relationship that would certainly continue between her and her ward, when the latter comes of age, is wedded to freedom, and keeps house for herself.

Young India may therefore rest assured that she will be given her full rights when she has qualified herself for exercising them, and during the course of her training, she cannot display her gratitude and affection for her guardian with greater grace than by not offending her with unwarranted presumption and untimely eagerness to succeed to her possessions and privileges.

Having thus proved the legitimacy and justifiableness of their aspirations and indicated the way to avoid the charge of selfishness and ingratitude, I shall next examine briefly how my countrymen can best and soonest realise those aspirations and befit themselves for self-government I have already referred to the fact that in the internal security and peace of the Indian peninsula as a whole under a uniform and powerful government, a piece of good fortune which the country had never known within the memory of history, we now have the one indispensable condition for the consolidation of a nation and the birth of the consciousness and the feeling of a common nationality. The hand of Providence has accomplished what we were unable to attain for ourselves and if we still blindly grope in darkness and discord, and continue our selfish scrambles, refusing to open our eyes and profit by the divine blessing, we shall have ourselves to blame and cannot with any show of justice saddle fate with our well-merited slavery.

The Hindus with their numerous castes and divisions, the Muhammadans, the Indian-Christians, the Parsees, the Eurasians,

and the Europeans engaged in public service or private enterprise are the chief elements that form the India of to-day, and owing to differences in race, religion, social customs and language, they seem to be so incompatible with one another that any reasonable person might well feel sceptical of their ever uniting into a homogeneous whole.

But we must not forget that the conditions of nationality have entirely changed within the past few generations, that fanaticism and superstition have lost their hold on the human mind, and that a wide and noble toleration has taken their place and pervades all modern institutions and activities. Fervent apostles of different religions, who would, not many centuries ago, have torn each other to pieces, now meet in perfect concord, exchange compliments and social amenities and calmly discuss the merits of their respective creeds; a Christian admiral wins the battles of the great Buddhist Mikado and is worshipped by his countrymen as a national hero; Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Agnostics and even Atheists deliberate together in national assemblies and order their common national affairs. "Live and let live," is the motto of the day, and there is no reason why the Indians alone should fail in realising it in practice.

It is therefore the supreme duty of every Indian patriot, be he Moslem or Hindu, Christian or Zoroastrian, to forget his race and religion altogether whenever he has to consider anything of national interest and importance. The Muhammadan will never again go back to the land of his forefathers beyond the snowy mountains, the Parsee will never again return to the shade of the peacock throne; and the Eurasian is not wanted in the British Isles. India is their present and their future home and the sooner they recognise this unalterable fact and put their shoulders jointly to the wheel of India's amelioration and progress, the better it will be for themselves and their posterity. As for the Hindu, he is apt to look upon Moslems and most other non-Hindus as foreigners and intruders. Let him not forget that they are aliens only in a relative sense, and that pushing the argument a few more centuries backwards, he will himself have to follow them across the Himalayas, leaving his holy Aryavarta to the almost extinct aborigines of the land. Let him also remember that the law of primogeniture is not the law of his forefathers and that he has no

right to refuse his younger brothers a share in the common inheritance. The pure Muhammadans and the Hindu converts to the religion of the Prophet are all Indians now and the country belongs as much to them as to the Hindus. If the latter put forward a prior right, the former can urge the right of conquest. The destiny of these two races has been linked together in India inseparably and for ever, and mere self-interest, to cite no nobler reason, should induce them to overcome the feelings of aloofness, antipathy, distrust and aggressive rivalry which now characterise their mutual relations. and to mingle together in brotherly citizenship. Too much forbearance, tact and sympathy cannot be brought into play in bringing about this noble union and he will be a genuine patriot who deliberately bears this in mind in every act of his life and endeavours by all fair means to promote a feeling of concord between these two races, while the curse of Mother India will lie heavily on all those who, from whatever motives, attempt to keep them asunder and perpetuate this estrangement, be they Hindus or Moslems, Zoroastrians or Christians, Indians or non-Indians.

As for my brothers the Hindus, there is little love lost now between the different castes, sub-castes and sects and they are divided into numerous contending factions, jealous of each other and with no mutual sympathy or confidence. They form the vast bulk of the Indian population and there can be no solidarity and union in the country as a whole, as long as there is discord and disunion among the great majority of its inhabitants. Their duty to their country therefore demands that they should forget their petty and puerile differences and stand shoulder to shoulder as Indians and none else in all that concerns the welfare of their ancient mother-land. Our goal is complete political enfranchisement and all our political efforts have therefore to aim at the gradual expansion of our powers and privileges until that goal is attained. Before we can expect our rulers to give us a larger share in the management of the state, we must convince them that we are worthy of the privileges we now enjoy and capable of exercising such rights of local self-government as we have been experimentally granted. For it is a stern fact, proved beyond doubt or dispute by the history of our country, that we have not, as a nation, hitherto evinced any marked capacity for political freedom and

responsibility, or even expressed any discontent at our subordinate position. We are just awakening from our long slumber and rubbing our eyes and we are unfit to behold at once freedom in all her dazzling splendour and glory. When therefore a man has to be elected to any self-governing representative institution, let us forget his caste and creed and see only whether he is the fittest man we have for the place, for on him and his compeers will depend the further enlargement of our rights and liberties and our eventual enfranchisement. Political freedom is a sharp and dangerous two-edged sword, and we shall not be the worse for being delayed the honour of wearing it a little longer than we think reasonable; and our rulers, whose forefathers shed their best blood in securing it for their sons, cannot be blamed if they watch our efforts with what looks like step-motherly sympathy.

I have hitherto spoken of the different classes of my countrymen according to their race or caste, but there is a more useful method of classification—to classify them according to the distribution of wealth, natural intelligence and culture among them, a method more truly consistent with our political aspirations and hopes, and then to define their respective duties and responsibilities to each other and to the mother-country. There is at the bottom of the social scale the great agricultural proletariate, a vast, incongruous mass wallowing in superstition, ignorance and squalor, with little food and less clothing. So poisonous and infectious is their condition that the higher classes keep them at a great distance and avoid all communication with them as far as possible. But they are the real bread-producers of the country and as long as they are denied a reasonable and sufficient share in the bread they produce and are allowed to starve and perish in misery and squalor, so long will a just Providence deny the higher classes a share in what they consider theirs by right of birth. The right to live in comfort earned by work done, and not to starve and perish slowly, is undoubtedly superior to that of national freedom, and no one can consistently ignore the former and claim the latter. It is therefore the primary duty of every Indian patriot to do his best for the amelioration of the tillers of the soil. I do not plead that they should be given higher education or an active hand in the Government of the country. I only urge that in return for the bread they provide for us, and which most of us are incapable

of providing for ourselves without their help, we are bound to feed, clothe and house them better, to raise them from the mire of ignorance and superstition in which they are now grovelling, to treat them not worse than our cattle and dogs, but better, and so as to make them walk erect and feel that they too are human beings, in short, to make life a little pleasant to them and not the chronic starvation endured in mental and moral darkness and with unceasing toil which it now is. The moral effects accruing from such an act of justice and mercy, and the material advantages resulting from a more efficient, contented and intelligent proletariate would be immense and considerably help on the national cause.

Next above is the class of petty daily labourers and artisans who are slightly better off than the lowest classes, but whose means of livelihood are still more or less precarious. With a little education, some small capital and a guiding hand, this class can be made happier and more productive to the country and it is the duty of the higher classes to provide these means of amelioration. If the richer and the more intelligent classes furnish the necessary technical knowledge and supervision and the capital for a start, this class will help to develop the native industries and thus enrich the country; and power closely follows wealth. There is also a numerous class in this country, that of the able-bodied poor who, partly from laziness and partly from the cheapness of labour, live on the charity of the people, dead to all feelings of decency and self-respect; and the development of the industries of the country and the consequent demand for labour will tend to wean this class from its shameful parasitical mode of life.

Then come the higher artisans who contributed so much to the glory of the country in the past but who are now languishing for lack of education, organisation and capital. Theirs is the hereditary skill and aptitude which, trained in modern ways and placed above the anxieties of mere bread-winning, will again spread the fame of India throughout the civilised world. Our millionaires and princes do not despise art and her products, but their tastes have degenerated and they ape foreign ways and fashions and patronise foreign manufactures even of an inferior kind. True, native art has become costly on account of our neglect of it, and it is not abreast of the times because the artist is an uneducated

villager. But there are enough rich men who can, if they like, rectify both these defects by a little sacrifice, and lack of genuine patriotism is the sole reason for their indifference. And even those of us who are not rich and who use every day so many articles of manufacture as necessities or as luxuries of life can always help native art by our choice and by such little sacrifices as our means admit of. The general indifference in this respect is the result partly of false notions of what is fashionable and up-to-date but mostly of sheer thoughtlessness. We go into a shop, for example, and buy two Austrian bent-wood chairs without thinking that stronger chairs can be made of teak or rose-wood by a native carpenter and caner for the same price or perhaps a little more which we may not grudge. There are many articles that have now become necessities of life which we must always purchase from a foreign market; so, also, there are Indian articles required by foreigners. But to prefer an article of foreign make to a native one, other conditions being almost equal, is simply suicidal, and if only people will think of it and act accordingly, native art will soon revive and flourish. The demand will create the supply and when both are considerable, the prices will become reasonable and fair. A little sacrifice may be required at first and if there be not enough patriotic feeling to ensure it, the cause of the country is indeed hopeless and we are dreaming of political privileges far too early.

There is a large class of petty landlords who live on their ancestral lands, doing no manual labour themselves, and whose natural intelligence is of a high order, capable of being educated up to any work. A good proportion of the rising generation of this class is to be found in our schools and colleges and many of an earlier generation are now performing important functions in public life. This class is the very backbone of orthodoxy and conservatism and with more enlightenment is bound greatly to influence the future of the nation. They require political education and an enlargement of their views of life in general by means of lectures and the wide distribution of suitable tracts in the vernaculars and this is one of the essential duties of the Indian patriot at present, for their sympathy and co-operation will bring a giant's strength to his arms.

There is then the small class of uneducated rich men who

have inherited vast ancestral fortunes and who are therefore of great influence in the country. The old-type merchants and capitalists may well be clubbed together with these. Theirs is the wealth which, if invested in productive and patriotic undertakings, to tap the buried resources and develop the decaying industries of the country, will multiply a hundredfold and prove a panacea for many of our evils and misfortunes. But they are selfish, narrow-minded and ignorant, and patriotism is not one of their weaknesses. Time alone can improve them, but the patriot can, in the meanwhile, appeal to their feelings of generosity, self-respect and pride and by constantly dinning into their ears their duties to their mother-land, attempt to enlist their powerful and invaluable co-operation.

The ruling princes and chiefs are at the head of our society and many of them are well-educated and are doing valuable work in their provinces. Theirs was the country and they should therefore form the front rank among Indian patriots. But it cannot be said that, barring a few noble exceptions, they are as a class doing all that might be reasonably expected of them By financing new industries and encouraging existing ones, by exploring and developing the mineral resources of the country, by providing scholarships for technical education abroad and arranging for the diffusion of useful knowledge among the masses, by countenancing and encouraging social and religious reforms and by directing the rich proceeds of religious endowments into useful and beneficial channels, which are in consonance with modern views and requirements while not inconsistent with the purposes of the founders and donors, they can do for the improvement of the country what no other class can ever hope to do so well and they can also educate their subjects in political matters and train them in the exercise of political rights and privileges. But all this means a very high sense of liberal patriotism and duty and an immense capacity for noble self-sacrifice which are incompatible with a life of indulgence and pleasure and a craving for empty honours and applause.

In this by no means exhaustive list of the chief classes of the Indian people, I have purposely reserved the English-educated classes to be spoken of last, and from them originated the leaven of patriotism gradually leavening the whole country. The noble

burden of the country's amelioration and progress rests entirely on their shoulders and it is they who owe a duty to all the other classes. They may conveniently be separated into two main divisions—those in the service of Government and those who are not. The opinions and activities of the Government servants are regulated by definite rules which prohibit politics altogether and they cannot therefore be expected to join the patriots and work for the country with them. But there is a good deal which they alone can do, and that with ease and facility, and if they only performed it efficiently, they might well claim to be numbered among the truest patriots of the land. They can, for example, interpret and work the rules and regulations with sympathy and in a liberal spirit, without in the least compromising the true interests of the Government they serve. In the course of their daily duties, they can explain to the people that appear before them the rules and laws of Government and the principles underlying these and thus disseminate useful political knowledge. They can represent boldly the difficulties and grievances of the people to the administrative chiefs of their respective departments and obtain for them valuable concessions and reliefs. And, above all, they can be honest, upright and self-respecting in the discharge of their duties and thus establish a reputation for native talent and rectitude and prove their own fitness for the highest posts in the administration of the country. But is this their ideal as a class now and are they fulfilling these duties to their country and their countrymen? Are they not often corrupt and harsh and do they not seek to advance their own interests by betraying the rights and interests of the people? Is it not a fact that many of these *Indian* officials are far less trusted and liked by the people, their own countrymen, relatives and friends, than the over-bearing and short-tempered European officials who have softer and better principled hearts within their rough exteriors? Well may such unworthy sons of the soil be compared to the proverbial wooden handle of the axe, which, itself a small branch of a tree, causes the destruction of many mighty forests of its own kith and kin.

The non-official educated class consists mostly of my brethren the lawyers, the teachers in private schools, and a few merchants and landlords. The modern patriotic movement originated in

this class and is guided solely by members of it. Even to the most casual observer and thinker it will be plain that the salvation of the country depends entirely on education and on the organisation of capital. The ignorant millions of the land, sunk in superstition and lethargy, have to be awakened to a sense of their own rights and responsibilities, and a healthy and genuine discontent with their present condition and a keen longing for a higher and a fuller life have to be infused into them; our women have to be educated and raised to their proper level in the national life; our artisans and merchants have to be made efficient and up-to-date; and industrial knowledge and skill have to be transplanted into our soil from beyond the surging seas. Even those engaged in trades and manufactures are ignorant of the most important and elementary economic laws and there is too much of mutual distrust and ignorance for any organisation of capital on a large scale. General and commercial education alone can cure these evils; and besides these, there are scores of other grave social evils such as the mania for jewels and the waste of enormous sums of money during marriages, funerals and similar occasions, which indirectly cripple the commercial development of the country and for which, too, education is the only cure. Here is, indeed, a large enough field for labour for more than a generation of Indian patriots and it is such labour that must be completed, and the harvests thereof reaped and garnered, before purely political questions are approached.

I may here draw the attention of my countrymen to a widely prevalent custom on which I hold strong opinions. By the poor as well as by the rich, education is valued almost solely as a means of earning money, and Government service is coveted as the surest way to attain that object. Our rich and influential gentry, our leading metropolitan lawyers, who have princely incomes and who are our national pillars, and the few Indian officials who enjoy large salaries and have influence with the European heads of departments, all alike, seek to enlist their sons and relatives in Government service, using their influence to procure for them as good a start as possible. This is evidently selfish and unpatriotic, and if such men are unwilling to try the capacities of their youths in more directly patriotic pursuits than state-service

the country cannot have enough workers for her great cause and our progress must necessarily be very slow. The duty of practical patriotism here is as clear as it can be and it is the duty of young men with wealth and brains to develop the resources and industries of their mother-land and serve her in the best possible ways. There is a homely Tamil saying that a paper melon cannot be cooked, and no more, I may add, can mere patriotic speeches and professions, without noble self-sacrifice and strenuous efforts, achieve industrial progress or political privileges.

I have sought to indicate a few useful and profitable channels for practical patriotism. A new spirit is swaying the minds of the younger generation and all the air is astir with schemes for national regeneration and dreams of national greatness. The call has gone forth in the name of mother-India, our ancient mother of innumerable sages and saints, poets and philosophers, martyrs and heroes in the past, and the dim memory of her olden glory has stirred deep within the hearts of her sons, now fallen on other days, and many have sprung forward to respond to the call. But so ignorant, poor and degenerate have her sons become now, to such lethargy have they been reduced by centuries of ignoble stagnation, that of these many not a few may prove unworthy of championing her holy cause. But they who fondly believe that such a precious fountain of all that was once great and sacred and glorious in the world cannot altogether dry up into an arid waste, that the human heart is capable of again throbbing with such high and noble feelings as once well-nigh strained its walls, also believe that some at least of these will prove to be genuine patriots of the true metal, worthy of any cause and of any country, and that the great and benign Providence which out of a number of contending nations chose the British people to guide the destiny of India will inspire British statesmanship with the noblest feelings of duty and responsibility, and, as it confides not in numbers for strength, will be pleased to bring about that great destiny by means of even these few of India's worthy sons. Civilisation will never willingly forget the names of those who help and participate in this restoration of an ancient people to more than their ancient glory and prosperity, while all those who instead of putting their shoulders to the wheel of human progress place obstacles in its sacred path will for ever be regarded as the enemies of mankind.

RELIGIOUS REFORM.*

"Superstition is the reproach of the Deity."—*Bacon.*

It is with much diffidence, gentlemen, that I venture to speak to you to-night on the subject of religious reform: not that I am doubtful of my own convictions, but that they are so strong and seem to be so diametrically opposed to the opinions of most of my friends as illustrated by their conduct, that I have great misgivings about the practical usefulness of my task and feel almost sure, on the other hand, of annoying and even angering a good many of you and diminishing what little of good feeling you may now have towards me. It will perhaps be more correct to say that we differ not so much in our intellectual beliefs and persuasions as in our estimates of the extent to which we are bound in conscience to put them into practice and of the attitude we are bound to assume towards all inferior beliefs and persuasions, consistent with common honesty and self-respect. For I am sure that an analysis of our individual religious convictions will prove that we are all of us essentially at one and that we disagree merely because many of us seem to hold that the sphere of belief is not above the sphere of reason only, but also of practice. I have therefore appropriately chosen my text for to-night's address from Francis Bacon, the great English philosopher, whose brains and tongue were of the purest gold, but whose heart and limbs were, like our own, of ordinary human clay. He laid down the wisest moral precepts, but in practice, he was no better than his less wise contemporaries. A wrong done in ignorance is excusable and comparatively devoid of consequences; but when it is done in full knowledge of its true nature and despite the doer's convictions to the contrary, it is a sin and a fruitful source of endless evil to all round, and illustrates the impotency of the intellect to control our actions. Such grave sins, prolific fountains of ignorance, superstition and misery, we are responsible for, gentlemen, in respect of our religious beliefs and practice, and I am so sincerely convinced of this and so alarmed at the risks to our moral health and progress with such a source of deadly poison in our midst, that no mere

* A lay sermon delivered before the *Hindu Samaj*, Bamboor.

personal motive can prevent me from drawing your attention to the *common danger to-night*. This is my only excuse, and I hope that you, who, with the noblest and the most transcendental beliefs countenance and even personally take part in the most barbarous and superstitious rites and practices, will have enough tolerance to hear me with patience and to respect my sincerity.

We do not know and we cannot say whether the inhabitants of this earth other than man, feel any curiosity in the sentient universe and ever ransack their brains for a solution of the mystery of it. Man, however, from hoary antiquity, seems to have had this inquisitiveness, which we generally term the religious instinct, and has propounded to himself many a theoretical explanation. Not content with exercising his own intellect to the extent of its innate capabilities on the subject, he has, truly or fondly, imagined and believed that he has been inspired and helped on to the solution of the mystery by higher and supernatural powers and intelligences, mostly of a non-sentient nature, believed by him to exist. In these attempts of his, there is practically no form, including himself, which man has not worshipped and no force which he has not deified. The different solutions of this most fascinating mystery form the religions proper of the world, and if a large number of believers in any dogma or even the presence of some world-famous giants of intellect among such a number, can indicate its infallibility, all religions must be true. In analysing the results of these manifold human efforts to account for and explain the universe, we notice a general tendency to reduce the number of supernatural agents pressed into service until the supernatural element altogether disappears and we are face to face with absolute monism and materialism. Our forefathers seem to have carried off the palm of victory at both the extremes, for no other nation stocked its pantheon with thirty-three crores of gods and no other nation asserted *Tatwam asi* (Thou art That), identifying man himself with the universe and with godhead. Of the five great religions of the world, leaving out of count the minor creeds of less civilised peoples, two had birth in our country; and of the other three, one has four insolubles, a trinity, which later speculation has tried to unify, and the universe; another has three, two opposite principles and the universe; and the third, the last born, has two only, God and the universe. It

was the meditation of our forefathers which further reduced the number to one, representing the manifested universe as a mere shadow of the *One Without A Second*, and it is no small part of our national glory that they accomplished this supreme feat of abstract thinking and enunciation at a time when all other peoples of the earth were immersed in paganism and barbarous superstition.

Gentlemen, I would ask you to reserve your applause till I have done. It is indeed wonderful, how, with such a small quantity of what Comte has called positive knowledge, they jumped to conclusions and formulated general laws of the universe, which, with microscopes, telescopes and innumerable other scopes and appliances and after centuries of patient toil and observation, the science of the west is just creeping into a dim glimpse of. We are told that the Darwinian theory of evolution is foreshadowed in the philosophy of our ancient Kapila; that our olden astronomers knew facts and figures which the west was ignorant of until comparatively the other day; that the atomic theory of western savants is but a tentative hypothesis and that they are yet to discover the unity of all matter living or non-living, as known to our progenitors, and we are naturally proud of the fact that the westerns are being initiated into this knowledge by one of our own countrymen who is experimenting with their instruments on what may paradoxically be termed the signs of life in the misnamed non-living. Numerous other similar achievements of our forefathers may be cited and I shall, later on, have occasion to speak of their explanation of the inequalities of life by the theories of re-incarnation and *karma*, which, though dimly comprehended and blindly believed in by some other ancient peoples, were by none else so clearly and scientifically worked out in detail. We may well be proud of being the descendants of such mighty intellects and we are far ahead of other peoples in respect of religious speculation and philosophy.

I have hitherto spoken only of cosmogony or religion proper, and a mere theory of the universe is, by itself, of no great importance to man, except as it serves to set at rest his irrepressible inquisitiveness. In fact, some thinkers have been induced, by the limited nature of the human mind and the necessarily infinite nature of the mystery, by its still remaining essentially a mystery

despite so many centuries of hard and earnest thinking, by the inconceivability of the solutions hitherto proposed and by the impenetrable thickness of the veil behind veil that seems to enshroud it, to relegate it to the province of the un-knowable, thus circumscribing the sphere of human speculation for ever. But there is another and a greater side to religion which is all-important to man, and which can make a savage or a saint of him. This is the practical side and it connects religion with ethics or the principles of right and wrong which govern human conduct. Man differs from other animals in being endowed with the faculty of reason which raises most of his actions above natural instinct and creates in his mind a sense of right and wrong and enables him to discriminate between the two. This is a most troublesome and dangerous privilege and on its right exercise depends his best happiness. "I protest," says Professor Huxley, "that if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning before I got out of bed, I should instantly close with the offer. The only freedom I care about is the freedom to do right; the freedom to do wrong I am ready to part with on the cheapest terms to any one who will take it of me." It was inevitable that primitive man, face to face externally with the terrors, magnificences and sublimities of nature, and deifying and trying to propitiate as well as he could all that appeared supernatural and inexplicable to him, and confused internally by the "still small voice" of an incipient conscience and the budding sense of right and wrong, should connect the two and thus for ever link together his cosmogony and his ethics. Nothing can be more fascinating than the contemplation of the innumerable conflicts in the primitive human mind and the gradual course of development of the higher self or conscience. But I cannot tarry to dwell upon that scene and must pass on to the fact that different races of mankind, living in different regions of the earth and believing in different theories of cosmogony, have, nevertheless, arrived at essentially the same vital principles of ethics. This was inevitable, man being subject to the same natural laws in every age and clime, and his ethics, unlike his cosmogony, being based on experience and not on belief merely.

In every religion there is a personal side which treats of salvation, and of the dogmas a belief in which alone can bring that about. This is invariably connected with the particular cosmogony of each religion, the nature of the God or gods, and similar points of revelation and belief. In this age of advancing democracy and personal liberty, all, I am sure, will agree in considering this as the private and personal concern of every reasonable human being, over which no other human being has any right of control beyond advice, or evangelistic preaching when conscientiously impelled thereto. I am not concerned with this phase of religion here and if only other men would do likewise and each look after his own soul and salvation, there would be much less misunderstanding and misery in this world. I am speaking solely of social religion or ethics, that is, the principles deduced from religion for the conduct of men in society.

I have already said that these principles are essentially the same in all the great religions; but their *rationale* is not the same nor are they assigned the same importance in all. Begotten of fear and doubt in the primitive human mind and early connected with cosmogony, these principles of conduct are popularly referred to the will of God Who promulgates them, rewards their observance and punishes their neglect. The authority of the scriptures in each religion is but a later and confirmative stage of this revelation basis of ethics. A yet later development is the substitution of reason for authority and the attempt to found ethics on natural laws observable in the universe. That neither divine revelation nor saintly authority was ever found adequate to ensure human obedience to the moral code sanctioned by religion even in the most bigoted times, is proved by the existence of civil, criminal and social laws and courts, at all times and in all climes, which would otherwise have been quite redundant. That the basis of reason, a relatively modern experiment with most of the nations, and one which is yet partly in the experimental stage, is, perhaps equally impotent to enforce right and consistent conduct, can be easily ascertained by a little analysis of one's own opinions and actions. It is quite clear that the intellectual conviction of the truth of a principle does not necessarily result in action in conformity to it and that though, no doubt, it has a powerful effect on the mind, it is yet weaker than natural feelings and impulses

in shaping the conduct of most human beings. And yet we are forced to conclude, even on *a priori* grounds,—and experience does not militate against this conclusion—that the attempt to base ethics on reason is a step in the right direction, that, though now weak and powerless, reason is bound to exercise a far wider and stronger influence in human affairs than mere blind belief or even arbitrary revelation and authority ever did, and that the foundation on the quicksands of belief and authority was only a temporary measure, until the rock of reason could be excavated to a sufficient depth and a mightier and a more lasting edifice built thereon.

An analysis of these impulses and feelings which we found to be directly controlling and shaping our actions and which we may call the motor muscles of the mind, shows that they are the legacies of heredity and the fruits of early impressions and experiences. Speaking of this great factor in our lives, Coleridge most truly says of its power :—

> " O no ! it is the common, the quite common,
> The thing of an eternal yesterday,
> Whatever was, and evermore returns,
> Sterling to-morrow, for to-day 'twas sterling !
> For of the wholly common is man made,
> And custom is his nurse ! Woe then to them
> Who lay irreverent hands upon his old
> House furniture, the dear inheritance
> From his forefathers. For time consecrates ;
> And what is grey with age becomes religion."

Therefore is it that we find that mere intellectual convictions have so little practical influence over our actions and that the later in life they are come by the less even that small power. But they have quite another value and sphere of influence in society : they are bound to exercise a much stronger sway on all younger and more impressionable minds and thus acquire a greater hold on them and in the course of a number of generations become gradually incorporated with the active impulses and feelings that control action. This truth is tellingly embodied in the popular saying that the heresies of to-day will be the superstitions of to-morrow, and is nothing more than a simple process of mental evolution.

Among the western nations, the persons who have hitherto attempted to dissociate ethics from religion and base it on reason have been men to whom philosophy and rationalism appealed more directly and powerfully than orthodox religion, and the accredited authorities of religion have not yet adopted it in preference to what they consider the superior religious basis of ethics. But here, in India, our forefathers have long ago attempted to base ethics solely on reason, that is, by means of two great spiritual laws, Re-incarnation and Karma, referring the laws themselves to the will of the Inscrutable One. They have worked them out scientifically and in minute detail, and as far as Hindus are concerned, their truth is not merely a matter of intellectual conviction, but an instinctive feeling felt to the marrow of their bones. Our speech, ideas and thoughts are simply saturated with it. But, alas, the corruption of ages has set in here too and these true and noble doctrines of life have been reduced to a meaningless and stupefying fatalism and we have lost all the good they are capable of doing us when understood aright and suffer from all the evils of their vitiation and corruption.

Let me now examine the doctrines themselves and explain my statement more clearly. You may remember, gentlemen, how our Tamil sage and bard Thiruvalluvar illustrates the glory of righteousness by asking us to look at the rich man who rides in a palanquin and his fellow-men who carry him. Not the most elaborate one-life theory, with innumerable nicely graded *post mortem* hells and heavens, can even inadequately account for or justify the gross inequalities of actual life, or find any reason, justice, or law in this world. Brushing aside all other considerations and evidences—and I may here remind you that we, Hindus, claim to have direct proofs founded on personal experience on the subject—and arguing purely on *a priori* grounds, it is impossible not to infer a before and an after to our earthly existence, or, in other words, re-incarnation, if, indeed, there be any truth in the universal instinct of humanity that, patent and glaring instances to the contrary notwithstanding, there is a just law governing the universe and that good is the final goal of all apparent evil. No sane thinker can overlook this instinct and no theory other than re-incarnation has ever been propounded to vindicate it. It is indeed the root idea of evolution and not a modern fabrication

of an ingenious brain. It is a fundamental axiom in most of the great religions of the world, though the Indian religions alone have developed it in detail and utilised it in practical philosophy. I cannot do better here than quote the words of a great Western thinker on this subject :—

" . . . All we can do is to show that it would be profoundly unphilosophical to believe anything else—anything, that is to say, at variance with that doctrine ; that Re-incarnation can satisfactorily account for all the phenomena of human life (which the idea can have any relations with), and that these would be chaotic and unintelligible otherwise ; that without bringing in this all-important interpretation of its conditions the world around us would be a creation of malevolence and injustice, rather than one of wisdom and goodness ; that only by recognising Re-incarnation can we account for one man being a Newton and another an ignorant blockhead ; finally, that although the majority of human beings at the present stage of evolution—for reasons that esoteric teaching renders abundantly clear—do not remember their past lives, some people whose spiritual development has passed certain limits, actually *do* remember theirs, not merely in a vague and shadowy fashion, but with complete precision and even a fuller grasp of detail than untrained memory will afford in dealing with the earlier periods of a current life. . . . I claim for it all the while that it can be so nearly proved by reasoning, that no intelligent man who correctly apprehends the idea, and who applies it with adequate patience to the experience of existence whether in or out of the body, can possibly fail to believe it as fully, for example, as the modern scientific world believes in the undulatory theory of light. . . . It is the only theory that will explain all facts. And so with Re-incarnation in the domain of spiritual science ; it is the only theory which will explain all facts, and it is luminous with a truly scientific aspect ; that is to say, it is in harmony with the uniformities of Nature, affording indeed the only way out of supposing that the uniformities of Nature are rudely violated in the laws which govern the evolution of humanity." (*The Growth of the Soul*—by A. P. Sinnet.)

Speaking to you, gentlemen, heirs to this immortal philosophy, I think I need not expatiate on its tenets to-night, and to such of you as have any intellectual difficulties about it and are, in these strange times, ignorant of our ancient language in which our forefathers have expounded its principles, I cannot recommend a better book than the one I have just quoted from.

The wheel of re-incarnation turns on the axle of *karma* and is inseparably connected with it. The law of *karma* is nothing more than the expanded and thorough application of the universal law of cause and effect to super-physical planes of existence and activity. "Nothing is that errs from law," and not only our actions but also our inmost thoughts have their due effects on ourselves and others. Further, we are the results of our past and we sow now what we shall reap in the future. The conditions and environments, in their widest sense, into which a soul is born,

that is, an ego incarnates, are determined by the practically infinite past history of that ego, and, whether good or bad, are the ego's own earnings. The ego also brings with it the essence of the nett results of its past experiences and doings in the form of innate faculties, tendencies and instincts, and to a considerable extent the course of its new life is pre-determined by its past lives. But, at the same time, it has a free-will of its own and is not a mere irresponsible slave of destiny. At all times, man is master of his fate and can redress and rectify his past just as well as he can shape his future. To forget this is to lapse into cast-iron fatalism, and that is exactly what millions of our countrymen have done. A blind fatalism has sapped our national vitality, and though it has brought about a kind of narcotic indifference and contentment under any lot, it is the root cause of our national decay. It has left no rudder of ambition in our breasts and no oars of will-power and determination in our minds, and so we have become mere drifts in the ocean of humanity, now tacked to the bark of one nation and now of another.

But I am digressing. When there is the conviction in a man's mind that his condition in life is not the result of blind chance or destiny, or even the arbitrary will of an almighty and all-knowing Being, but of his own past actions and present doings; that good for good and evil for evil is meted out most rigorously by an all-just and all-powerful law which even his inmost thoughts could not evade or escape the notice of; that, as he now reaps what he has sown in the past, he will reap in the future what he now sows; that "the fixed arithmetic of the universe" is, in its calculations, instantaneous as well as eternal; and, finally, that good spells happiness and evil spells misery in this world,— there cannot be imagined a better foundation for ethics, as far as that man is concerned. And all these truths are provable to the intellect by the laws of re-incarnation and *karma*, and in a scientific manner, appealing solely to reason and never to revelation or authority. I have already indicated how mere intellectual beliefs become active forces in life in the course of a few generations, and why, therefore, they should not be despised by those who look forward and beyond the present.

The function of ethics is the perfection of humanity, and man becomes perfect when he realises and attains his highest and

purest ideal, which, with most men, is their ideal of God-head. All men admit that when any man becomes like unto God or is accepted of God or becomes one with God, then there is nothing more left for him to do or to achieve in this world; but, as I have already said, there is no complete unanimity of opinion among the different nations of the earth regarding this ideal of perfection. You all know our own national ideal and also the four comprehensive ways of good works, faith, meditation and knowledge leading towards its realisation. And you will have noted how, in all these ways, character is insisted upon as an indispensable condition, and how it is impossible to take the road to salvation, or liberation of soul as we call it, without the strong staff of character. The millennium when all souls will be found perfect and realise God is yet far off, and most of us are yet in the preliminary stage of perfecting our characters and will have to go through many more lives before we shall have performed that task aright. Our national code of popular religion and ethics must, therefore, have this end solely in view for many a century to come, if we are to progress at all towards our national ideal. Strength and money can command obedience, but character alone can command respect as well, and so, even from a selfish and worldly point of view, character is a mightier acquisition than the other two.

Let me now turn to our popular religious practices and ethical opinions and see how far they are calculated to help us on towards the realisation of our national ideal, by strengthening, purifying, and ennobling the average national character and gradually uplifting it to *Satvic* perfection.

Our idolatry and the practices and beliefs connected with it are incredibly childish and degrading. I have pointed out that a correct understanding of the laws of re-incarnation and *karma* governing human evolution is all that is required by any man to guide him in his personal and civic activities and lead him towards higher things. I am not sure whether, for a man who understands and acts according to those laws, a separate religion is necessary. And I believe that our popular religion was originally intended only for such as could not comprehend and act up to those laws and who, therefore, stood in need of some other ethical guide. If this is correct, I make bold to affirm that no guide ever proved more traitorous than our popular religion. To begin with, we have

entirely divorced ethics from religion, and thieves, murderers and adulterers pray and vow offerings to our gods for the success of their nefarious schemes. Sincerely religious and even bigoted men are no better than the rest of their neighbours in truthfulness, morality, honesty and other virtues. Nay, a religious man is often less trusted than one who does not parade his religion, and there are more hypocrites in the ranks of the devotees than among the profane. Popular religion has thus utterly failed to perform its one great purpose and no man is a better citizen merely for following it.

I have often heard it urged that our temples and idolatrous practices and beliefs embody great spiritual truths in a symbolic manner and are really treasure-houses of esotericism. I do not doubt this, and I admit that with esoteric spectacles we often see quite a different sight from what strikes the ordinary eyes. Maybe, our forefathers sought to preserve and perpetuate the great truths they had discovered in this manner. But I feel certain that, had they in the least foreseen that the manna of spiritual wisdom they wished to preserve and hand down for the benefit of their distant posterity would, in the course of ages, ferment and become a most poisonous and nauseous liquor which their descendants would unwittingly drink off freely, grovelling in beastly superstition and folly, they would have preferred to destroy the manna altogether and leave us to re-discover it for ourselves. I have heard idolatry defended on another ground—that we cannot meditate and worship without the help of a concrete form or symbol. I will not urge that this is a libel on innumerable millions of our fellow-beings who send their hearts up to God no less than five times a day without the aid of any idol or symbol, and are admittedly more religious, nay, fanatical than the followers of any other religion. I will not urge that several millions of Protestant Christians worship God, and thousands of them lead saintly and prayerful lives without any visible image. But I do urge most emphatically that, whatever may have been the original intention and whatever may be the esoteric meaning, the millions that perform idolatrous practices in this country see nothing symbolic behind the image and take the whole show quite literally. And can anything be more degrading to an intelligent human being? We know that all religions are necessarily more or less anthropo-

morphic. But our popular Hinduism surpasses everything else in this respect too. There is a famous shrine in this Presidency where the deity's *chota hazri* begins with bread and butter, and he goes on eating without respite till midnight, when he appropriately takes a decoction of dried ginger to help his digestion, before he retires to his bed-room with his consorts; there is another famous shrine where a cigar is left in the bed-room every night for his god-ship to smoke; in another shrine, under the management of a nominal ascetic, fetters are applied to the god's feet whenever the temple exchequer runs low, to extort money-offerings from the devotees and pilgrims; in numerous other shrines the deity is taken out in procession and whipped publicly for having committed petty thefts; in one shrine the whole process of a highway robbery is acted out in detail during the annual festival; births, marriages, deaths and similar occurrences are, of course, as common and frequent in our temples as in our homes. Gentlemen, can any amount of esoteric white-washing justify these disgraceful and fairly incredible practices? Then there are the *deva dasies*, our vestal 'virgins,' of whom even small and poor temples have one or two to boast. They are the recognised prostitutes of the country, and many sociologists are of opinion that no 'civilised' human society can completely get rid of such a class. Is that any reason why we should associate them with our religion and tempt the devil himself with their presence in our holiest places and shrines? In the town of Madras, many thousands congregate during the great festivals at Tiruvottiyur, Triplicane, and Mylapore. Do these gatherings heave with religious enthusiasm and fervour, and does the human spirit rise upward towards the throne of the Almighty in sincere supplication and prayer? Are they not, on the other hand, mere carnivals of the flesh, to which men and women resort with their paramours for a holiday, or to hear some famous piper, or to see the temple-women dance, or, perhaps, simply to see the crowd and the *tamasha* and air their best clothes and jewels? How many of these take the trouble to approach and see the images of the gods and goddesses, and of such, how many meditate on the symbolic meaning? Turn, on the other hand, to the Mahomedan celebration of the death of their saint Ali in the same city and see whether their religious fervour and fanaticism does not infect even the sight-seeing Hindus

on that day. Surely, to judge by the results, our popular idolatry is nowhere before iconoclastic Islam. If such be the case with our famous temples and shrines where the higher classes perform their worship and where no animal life is sacrificed, what shall I say of the demon-worship and the gruesome, bloody practices of the lower classes of society? How many millions of dumb, innocent and helpless living beings, indispensable for the comforts of man, are mercilessly slaughtered at the altars of superstition and ignorance year after year, and how many thousands of barrels of toddy, arrack and other alcoholic liquors are drunk in the name of religion and of the worship of God! And what nameless obscenities are committed every day in the sacred name of the Universal Mother in some parts of the country! Gentlemen, I am afraid I have already taken too much of your time, and were I to dwell in detail on all these superstitions and atrocities, and also on magic, witchcraft, astrology, demonology, and similar charlatanisms, which we somehow connect with our religion, and spend much of our time, money and energy about, I should require many days, and surely, it would not raise us, as a civilised and intelligent people, in the estimation of the rest of the world. Suffice it to say, therefore, that our popular religion consists mostly of crass and meaningless superstitions, revolting cruelties and obscenities, and stupid and wasteful tomfoolery; that it can only debase and nowise elevate and purify its devotees; that most of these devotees are hypocrites, and their despicable quarrels and litigations over the comparative merits of rival gods and goddesses a disgrace to human intelligence, and have their origin in secret, selfish motives; and that, on the whole, we are no better than barbarians, as far as our popular religious practices are concerned, with this difference,—that we have not even the excuse of knowing no better and cherishing no higher ideal.

Gentlemen, what should be the attitude of educated and cultured men like ourselves towards such a religion and what our duty towards the ignorant millions blindly wallowing in the mire? Spite of our education and culture, which are so much in evidence when political privileges are demanded from our rulers, are we ourselves free from these degrading superstitions in our heart of hearts, and are the *adwaitic, dwaitic* and *visishtadwaitic* ideals of religion which we profess to believe in and admire, and

are so highly proud of, anything more than mere intellectual exercises which do not affect our daily life and conduct? We pride ourselves on being the most religious people on the face of the earth, and undoubtedly we have succeeded in investing every one of our important and unimportant acts from the cradle to the funeral pyre, as well as imagined circumstances and occurrences before and after death, with a religious significance. Marine fish which live, move and have their being in the briny deep, do not absorb a grain of the millions of tons of salt enveloping them and have to be specially salted to prevent putrefaction and decay. Our religious life seems to be exactly similar, and honest, reasonable doubt, said to contain more truth than half the creeds, or some other less philosophic but more sincere and living form of faith, would certainly have been much better for us. Gentlemen, excuse me for narrating here a personal anecdote. I was once passing along a road, near which a big religious festival was being celebrated with all the pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious superstition, and the deafening clamour and brain-whirling chaos which must be heard and seen to be appreciated, when I saw a Christian missionary preaching to a handful of idlers in a corner, with bad mob-logic and in worse Tamil, the superiority of his own religion, and exhorting his audience to forsake the worship of Belial and Beelzebub and join the flock of the redeeming Christ. My patriotism at once boiled over, and I was about to enter into a disputation with him, backed by a long array of quotations from the Upanishads regarding *The One Without a Second* and so on. But suddenly I remembered that I had just left the company of a double-barrelled graduate of our university, who had spent most of his licit and other earnings in establishing a new temple dedicated to the deity known popularly as the Belly-God, with stone and metallic inscriptions in Sanskrit, and *English* too, narrating his worthy act for the admiration of posterity, and that while his conduct and that of hundreds of similar 'educated and cultured' men would give the lie direct to my intended boast to the preacher, of a superior religion being professed by the *élite* of the land, the revolting tomfoolery of popular religion around us deserved even a worse treatment than what the law-abiding missionary was according it in his lecture. I then felt that rather than be such Hindus, the thousands gathered there

might much better have been devout and sincere Christians, and I could not help wishing the missionary success in my inmost heart, though I knew my wish was vain. Gentlemen, he was doing there what you, and I, and all of us educated men should be doing daily, if we were true to our convictions and had any sense of our duties and responsibilities to our ignorant countrymen; and so I humbly bent my head and passed on.

This anecdote brings me to the constructive portion of my address to you to-night. I am not impatient, and I am well aware that the new spirit is of a very recent origin. Our women-folk are practically untouched by it yet; so also our fathers, uncles and other elders. We have, therefore, imbibed with our mothers' milk innumerable superstitions and beliefs, and have been nurtured under their influence in the most impressionable part of our lives; and no amount of subsequent education can wholly root out this early mischief. We are just like the lady who did not believe in ghosts, but was, all the same, afraid of them at night. But, as intelligent human beings, our duty is clear: we are bound to try our utmost to make our own conduct conform with our best and highest beliefs, and also to raise our less-knowing brethren from the abyss of superstition and mental darkness in which they are now hopelessly sunk. Our temples, festivals and religious practices should be shorn of all that is unseemly, degrading and grossly anthropomorphic, and if idolatry in some form or other is considered indispensable until a much higher level of general intelligence and knowledge is reached, it should be made as pure and elevating as possible. Our religion assigns to idolatry only a low and tentative status, and countenances it only as a step towards a higher platform of spirituality. We shall, therefore, be doing nothing against the spirit of our religion by such a cleansing and purification of the Augean stables of superstition, corruption and ignorance. Again, we should define the province of religion clearly in theory and in practice, and not hamper all our intellectual and even physical activities with it. In other words, we should try to be sincerely religious in a much more restricted sense, and not all-religious only in name. Religion, as well as our worldly affairs, will gain immensely by such a recognition of their respective spheres and separation of functions. A simple, fairly correct, and not too technical, knowledge of the doctrines of re-incarnation

and *karma*, with a clear, intelligible moral code deduced therefrom, should be spread among the masses down to the lowest stratum, by means of lectures, tracts and illustrative story-books adapted for school-rooms, and general education should be gradually diffused in the country. Our masses will readily listen to Hindu preachers during festivals and on market-days, and these occasions should be made use of by competent speakers to expound 'Unitarian' principles of religion and *Karmic* principles of ethics. We have done absolutely nothing in the matter till now; nay, we have been participating in all the stupidities ourselves and thus strengthening the cause of superstition and folly. Though, with many, this noble task should be one of love and divine worship through works, money will be required for performing it properly and thoroughly; and, fortunately for the cause, we have vast treasures ready to our hands. Many of our temples are fabulously rich, and command royal incomes which are now wasted in perpetuating the abominations condemned alike by true religion and reason; and many of our other religious institutions and *mutts* are richly endowed, and their resources are now mostly squandered by the presiding arch-hypocrites in litigation and immorality. If the salvation of the soul be the prime purpose of religion, these vast resources cannot be better utilised than in the dissemination of right religious and moral principles and in waging war against the powers of darkness and superstition. Their diversion into the proper channel of the education of the masses and religious preaching will, therefore, be perfectly legitimate; and if only our educated leaders of society will unanimously take action in the matter, and seek the intervention and help of the State, if necessary, it can be effected easily and speedily. When every temple—and there is not a single considerable village in the land which has not one—becomes a seminary, and every *mutt* a centre of learning, when teachers and preachers are all over the land educating the masses and dispelling superstition and ignorance, who can foreshadow the great religious upheaval that will then come to pass, and who that has observed the matchless power of even crude and ignorant bigotry, can estimate to what an extent such a religious awakening and reformation will stir up our social, industrial and political activities? South India has produced no Raja Ram Mohun Roy, or Keshub Chunder Sen, or

Debendranath, or Dayanandra in modern times, and the great Brahmo and other religious movements of Northern India are all but unknown here. To your feet, gentlemen, and let us pray to the Supreme Intelligence that sways the worlds to vouchsafe a ray of Its matchless glory to illumine the miserable darkness that enshrouds the land, and thus lead us on to greater light and a nobler life.—OM.

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